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Tuesday May 14 1996

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The Guardian

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INTERNATIONAL

NEWSPAPER OF THE YEAR
46,552

Kids

- Sex, drugs, bullying, home life
- The truth about 11 to 15-year-olds
- Exclusive ICM poll of teenagers

G2 with European weather • Plus: Is it really a man's world? G2 pages 12/13

Education

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Falkland veteran flees from Argentine ambush

Sarah Boseley

A FORMER British paratrooper has fled from Argentina in fear of his life after being cornered by a baying mob of Falklands veterans and branded a war criminal on television.

Ken Lukowiak, whose writing career was launched with a harrowing and highly praised account of the war called *A Soldier's Song*, had gone for the Guardian to Buenos Aires to talk to the soldiers he had faced in battle. Through an intermediary he arranged to meet two veterans of Goose Green in a restaurant last Thursday evening.

He walked into an ambush. "The first question I was asked was 'How do you sleep at night?' As I'm asking 'What do you mean?', lots of lights turned on. There was a television crew heading my way with about 30 people. Then I'm completely surrounded at the table with cameras and lights on me.

"They are screaming at me from all directions that I'm a murderer and I murdered Argentinian soldiers. Mothers of boys who died on the Belgrano are crying and shouting that I'm writing in the blood of their sons. I thought they were going to lynch me.

"I was very, very frightened. I remember the hate and anger on their faces." He tried to answer the charges, but could not get a hearing, although he spoke to the television crew once the protesters had gone.

Many of the protesters were waving copies of a passage from Mr Lukowiak's book which described his encounter with an Argentinian soldier on Wireless Ridge, an hour or two after ceasefire was declared. "I walked up to a trench and crouched down inside on the far side away from me was an Argentinian soldier holding a rifle. To me, he was a pop-up target. It was my instinct and my training. I put about half a magazine into him and I did it very calmly. I believe, hand on heart, if I had not done that I would not be here talking to you now," he said yesterday.

There was no way he said, that the enemy soldier could have known about the ceasefire.

The incident was shown on the Cronica television news channel that night and the next morning. In the country's main national news-



Ken Lukowiak during his visit to the Falklands, and (below) when he was a paratrooper



Crouched in the trench was a figure in grey. I saw him. He saw me. He held a rifle. I moved the first finger of my right hand and bullets left the end of my machinegun. They hit the figure in grey. They impacted into his chest and threw him back against the side of the trench. He said to the ground. His soul left him. Ken Lukowiak, *A Soldier's Song*

paper, *Clarion*, the Federation of War Veterans of the Argentinian Republic, who appear to have organised the protest, called on Sunday for the general prosecutor, Angel Agüero Irujo, to charge Mr Lukowiak with war crimes.

But Mr Lukowiak had already left the country. He left his hotel immediately, stayed with a friend overnight, and caught a plane home. The friend who gave him sanctuary, who would not be named, said: "If he had left two hours later, he wouldn't have been allowed to get on the plane."

The translator at the meeting, Dailia Herbst, said she was afraid for his safety and her own. "It was the worst thing that ever happened in my life."

Gas price cut spurs new panic

Simon Beavis and Nicholas Bannister

THE privatised gas industry was thrown into renewed chaos yesterday as British Gas warned that plans from its regulator to reduce bills by £30 a year would result in 10,000 job losses, threaten safety and cut payouts to shareholders.

Amid some of the most vitriolic exchanges between a privatised company and its regulator, British Gas made it clear that it was prepared to risk a third Monopolies and Mergers Commission (MMC) inquiry in five years to get the proposals watered down.

The row was sparked by plans from Clare Spottiswoode, director general of Ofgas, to impose tough price controls on British Gas's pipeline and transportation business, Transco.

The price cuts, far more stringent than the City had expected, led to £1.3 billion being wiped off the company's market value within hours of yesterday's announcement — equivalent to 13 per cent of its worth. Analysts predicted that British Gas could eventually be forced to halve the dividend payout to its 1.7 million small shareholders — the so-called Sids — and big institutions.

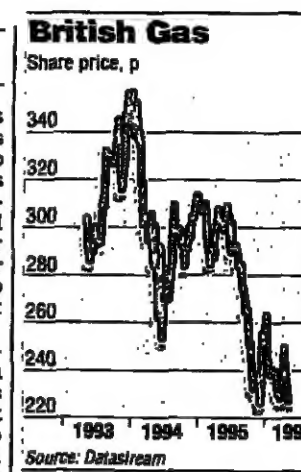
If the MMC is called in, it could result in a six-month investigation which would almost certainly jeopardise the Government's plans to introduce full competition into the domestic gas market — a centerpiece of its plans for the privatised utilities — from April 1998.

Presenting the plans, Ms Spottiswoode said that savings for domestic customers could rise to £50 a year over the five years of the new regulatory regime.

She is proposing to cut Transco's prices by between 20 and 28 per cent next year and to keep them pegged at 5 per cent below inflation in the following four years.

British Gas immediately dismissed the proposals as "one of the biggest smash-and-grab raids ever". It said they were short-sighted and would ultimately hurt consumers by putting at risk its statutory duty to transport gas "safely and efficiently".

The company, which has



been involved in a series of pitched battles with watchdogs since privatisation 10 years ago, has axed 23,000 jobs in the last three years.

Yesterday deputy chairman Philip Rogerson said the only way to meet the price caps would be to cut Transco's 20,000 payroll in half. He said they would cut revenues by up to £850 million a year — more than the company had earned in profits in each of the last two years.

"These draconian proposals will impose huge strains on the fabric of the UK gas industry at a time of great change," he added. "They are ill-conceived and have to be resisted."

As part of the preparations for competition, British Gas is splitting itself in two, with Transco being potentially the most lucrative new business through its ownership of the country's entire gas network.

The other new company, British Gas Energy, which will supply homes and indus-

try, will be burdened by long-term gas contracts signed before the company lost its domestic monopoly and before the onset of competition led to a collapse in prices. This company faces a review of prices by Ofgas within the next fortnight.

But an uncompromising Ms Spottiswoode rejected British Gas's dire warnings over job cuts and safety and said shareholders would receive generous although slightly smaller returns if the proposals went through. She accused the company of being "emotional".

She said the company could face a nasty shock if it forced the MMC to intervene, arguing that the commission could be even tougher. "The intellectual argument for the controls is so strong that I cannot believe the MMC would not agree with us."

Black day for Sid and Notebook, page 1; Leader comment, page 8

OJ survives 10-minute trial by television

Interview turns to farce as Neil Diamond takes centre stage

Stuart Jeffries

OJ Simpson is not so much skimming the cream of British life as scraping the bottom of the barrel during his stay in London. On Sunday he dined with Michael Winner and the kiss-and-tell king Max Clifford.

Last night, he spent the evening with Richard Madeley and Judy Finnigan. What next? Meeting Britain's Wimbledon hopefuls followed by a

retrospective of Carry On movies?

To be fair, his interview with the erstwhile king and queen of what Polly Toynbee called the "stupidity" of daytime TV was a more biting affair than one might have expected. From Richard's opening gambit, "Why do you think that so many people found it hard to believe that you were innocent?" to Judy's "So Nicole was the victim of a drugs murder?" the nervous pair seemed determined to ask tough questions.

But the fact that the in-

depth, exclusive interview was completed in just over 10 minutes, and the second half of the programme filled with what Richard grins promised would be music and conversation with the legendary Neil Diamond, made the interview ridiculous. Richard and Judy may have posed some of the questions that prosecutor Marsha Clarke would dearly love to have asked, but their impact was destroyed by the rollercoaster pacing and the awkward segue into an appraisal of Diamond's oeuvre.

Simpson, looking unfazed by the media frenzy and the cries of "murderer" which have greeted his stay in London, explained why he had bowed to his attorney's advice not to take the stand in last year's trial, in which he was acquitted of murdering his ex-wife Nicole and her friend Ron Goldman.

When asked what sort of person would have killed Nicole Simpson, OJ replied: "I obviously would be speculating. I feel that the answers lie in the world of Fay Ruzicki."

The fact that few British viewers would have a clue who Ruzicki is (a woman who became Nicole's friend after she had split from OJ) made the interview even more preposterous: we needed more than the idiot's Turn to page 2, column 1.

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Sketch

Best of enemies at harm's length



Simon Hoggart

PETER Mandelson slumped on the Labour front bench, legs slightly apart, arms folded across his chest, eyes hooded like a well-fed lizard. From time to time he would pull out a pocket bleeper and peer at it. I had always thought that bleepers were not permitted in the Commons chamber. Though no doubt this was one of those silent ones which vibrate gently against the flesh when its owner's attention is required. It must be rather pleasant. Perhaps Mr Mandelson has a friend who bleeps him now and again, just to cheer him up. By contrast, John Prescott sat up, looking bright-eyed and perky. Mr Derek Foster sat between them, in order to keep the peace. Mr Foster, who is the party spokesman on the civil service, resembles a snooker referee in manner and appearance. "Now lads, let's see if we can't settle this am-i-cably, right lads?" For someone who is supposed to be the smooth, behind-the-scenes Mr Fixit of the Labour Party, Peter Mandelson has an extraordinary gift for making enemies. He has been known to "boycott" people for fixed lengths of time, by way of punishment. We learned this weekend that he has not spoken to Gordon Brown, the Shadow Chancellor, for 18 months, although both men have important roles to play in the party's election campaign. As for his relations with Mr Prescott, we are told these have "improved". Well, they can hardly have got worse. Possibly they began as incandescent hatred on Mr Prescott's part and have since been downgraded to rancorous resentment. A mutual friend tells me that Mr Mandelson's greatest skill is in nurturing the people he does like. "If he wants you

on his side, he lavishes all his charm, his affection and his hard work on you," this friend told me. "He is like a little puppy." I suppose this makes him Britain's only lap-rottweiler. The Labour team was facing Michael Heseltine, who was curiously downbeat. He perked up only with a question from Jacques Arnold (C. Gravesham, or the Unquiet Gravesham as we now call it), who had been dug up by the whips yesterday morning to ask about Mr Mandelson's feud with Gordon Brown. "An interesting thought," said the Hezza, genially. "I would like to hold a reception, so that they can get together in convivial circumstances and iron it all out." Mr Skinner snarled that the Prime Minister had talked about having three bastards in his Cabinet. Yet the leadership election last year implied there were fully 80 bastards. Mr Heseltine beamed at him. "I will invite you to the reception as well," he said. Yesterday's questions ended with my favourite monthly session, as Michael Allison (C. Selby) answers for the Church Commissioners. The moment came and the sun suddenly poured through the windows, bathing the chamber in a radiant light. Tony Banks (Lab, Newham NW) was outraged — or at least was pretending to be outraged — by the fact that the Bishop of Chelmsford had said he was dissatisfied with his episcopal palace, although it has six bedrooms and sits in three acres. "If a manager was good enough for our Lord, then whingeing from princes of the Church is not good enough for us!" (I had always assumed that a manager was where, in his grumpier moods, Mr Mandelson kept his dog.) Mr Allison replied, in that slow, fluting voice reminiscent of the more old-fashioned Anglo-Catholic priests: "The Bishop occupies only a small part of the palace, which is impossibly close to the A12, a dual carriageway, so you cannot hear yourself think, speak — or pray." Mr Banks snorted with scorn. "It's only the Lord needs to hear you pray!" he shouted. Some people just don't know how to behave in Church.

'A lot of people are going to be sued before I am through with this'

O J Simpson



O. J. Simpson makes a point during his live interview on Richard Madeley and Judy Finnegan's new evening chat show

PHOTOGRAPH: CARLTON

No answers in OJ quiz show

continued from page 1 guide to the OJ murder trial at the start of the programme to understand Simpson's discursive replies. Mr Allison replied, in that slow, fluting voice reminiscent of the more old-fashioned Anglo-Catholic priests: "The Bishop occupies only a small part of the palace, which is impossibly close to the A12, a dual carriageway, so you cannot hear yourself think, speak — or pray." Mr Banks snorted with scorn. "It's only the Lord needs to hear you pray!" he shouted. Some people just don't know how to behave in Church.

So what questions would some of television's sharpest interrogators have asked OJ?



- Grid of questions and names of interrogators: "If you ask people to believe your innocence why didn't you take the witness stand... How can you prove to me that you didn't do it? Why did you run away... If you're prepared to talk to me, why wouldn't you talk to the jury... Would you have got away with it if you hadn't had the money to pay for the most expensive lawyers... You are not going to get him to confess, so I would come at him from a different angle..."

First night Soundscape with emotional punch

Bob Flynn Twenty Movements for Orchestra/A Scottish Island King's Theatre, Glasgow MAYFEST this year is undergoing a bit of a musical renaissance. After the shimmering, experimental triumph of Rhys Chatham's extravaganza for 100 guitars, it offered two world premieres from Scottish composers in one programme. New Glaswegian wonder-boy Craig Armstrong was the man behind Twenty Movements for Orchestra, while traditional folk musician William Jackson provided A Scottish Island. Both were performed by the Scottish Chamber Orchestra under the baton of Cecilia Weston, and the contrast could not have been more dramatic. Armstrong is one of the most prolific and eclectic composers of his generation, whose atmospheric orchestral work has been heard in everything from RSC theatre productions to the film soundtracks of Goldeneye and Batman Forever. He is a graduate of the Royal Academy of Music and Jazz Musician of the Year, who pays no attention to musical boundaries. Using the sampled voices of 10 Glaswegians of all ages, describing times of the day as the starting point for each of the 20 brief movements, Armstrong laced sentences and snatches of words into the music to compelling effect. Although deliberately fragmented, the pace was relentless and a taut, virtuosic performance by the Scottish Chamber Orchestra illum-

inated the piece with a tension and drive that never faltered, as sampled words and looped reggae beats shot through the movements, while images and lighting effects were projected on to a transparent screen in front of them. Over the collage of sounds, the glorious, cool power of mezzo-soprano Colette Ruddy sailed out, sometimes singing the spoken narrative, sometimes overlapping with the music, creating an ethereal soundscape that was sinister, strident and beautiful in turn. The important thing was the unexpected emotional punch. One of the movements, in which a child's voice described the flowers in a French garden, was a seamless blend of narrative, orchestra and song creating a sense of child-like wonder, while movement 16, a woman describing an early morning birth, had an eerie grace. With this haunting new work, Armstrong is moving towards a kind of new opera where multi-media is a redundant term and the sampler is an integral part of the orchestra. William Jackson's A Scottish Island, was a weak water-colour beside Armstrong's dark, edgy work and sounded delicate and under-developed. It originated very much from the traditional places of Scottish music, but the idea of blending folk sounds, using harps, whistles and pipes, with a dreamy backdrop of strings, never caught fire. It was probably unfortunate to combine the two works, as Armstrong's cutting edge only heightened the sense that Jackson's evocation of island landscapes was outdated.

Simpson said that criticism of him by fellow celebrities and the media had not affected him. Film star Bo Derek, 40, refused to appear on the Richard and Judy programme with him and boxer Mike Tyson has told O J to "keep his mouth shut and stop going around telling everyone he is innocent". But Simpson insisted his neighbourhood in the exclusive suburb of Brentwood in Los Angeles was fully behind him. "My neighbourhood has been supportive." There had been campaigns to force him out of Los Angeles, but to those who want him out he said: "I have been there for 19 years and I think you are the squatters. If you don't like it, you move." He added: "I now know who my friends are." He denied he only took notice of the race issue and

made a point of being black during and after the trial. Some people had regarded him as a colour-free celebrity before his arrest. "I saw some inequities in the legal system and some stereotypes over the years. With the media it's a stereotypical thing how they write about and view people of colour. With the legal system it's how they treat us." He insisted: "White America is still with me... I am hoping that some day that the whole world gets to be colour blind." Asked why he felt he had to run, leading to the live television car chase, he said: "I just felt I wanted to get away, to make all the pain go away. I was not running away, I just wanted the hurt to stop." He said there was no special woman in his life at the moment and denied allegations that he beat Nicole.

United Biscuits ends use of fish oil after penguin protest

UNITED Biscuits agreed to phase out the use of oil from industrial fisheries in their McVitie's biscuits only hours after 150 Greenpeace supporters dressed as penguins yesterday blocked the entrance to its factory in Harlesden, west London, writes Paul Brown. The fishery, which each year sucks up 8million tonnes of sand eels for the sea bed is

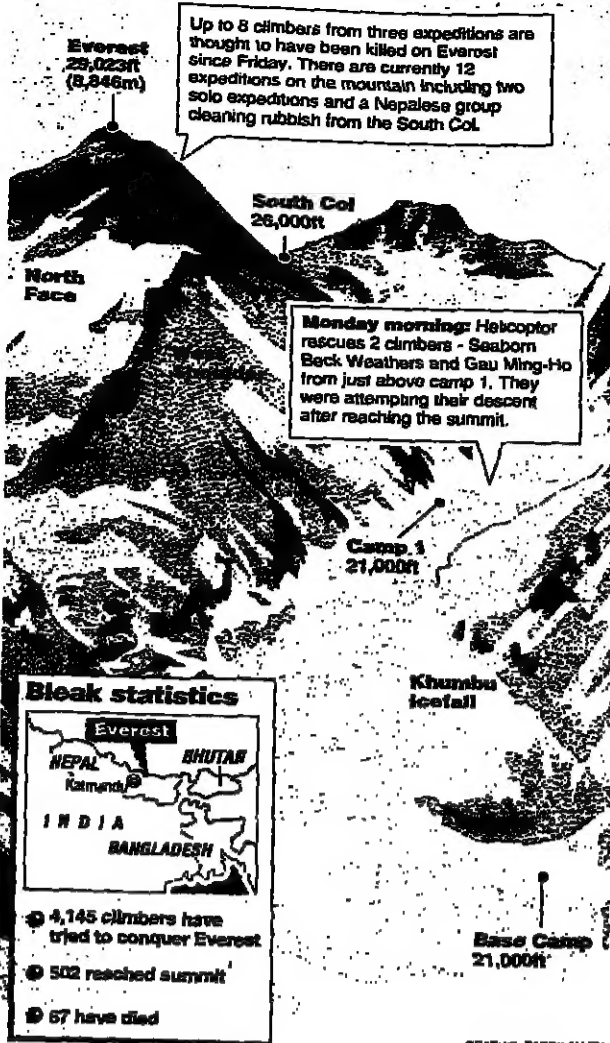
Ministers' beef threat

John Palmer in Brussels PROSPECTS for a partial lifting of the European Union ban on British beef hung in the balance last night as the Government issued veiled threats to block the EU's decision-making machinery if there is no early easing of the embargo. With governments still split on the wisdom of lifting the ban, the key decision rests in the hands of a committee of veterinary experts from the 15 EU countries which meets in Brussels tomorrow. Malcolm Rifkind, the Foreign Secretary, warned EU foreign ministers in Brussels yesterday that a continued refusal for a limited easing of the ban would "intensify the frustration felt by both the people and the Government in Britain". Since the Commission has recommended an easing of

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Mountain death toll



'A bivouac 150 metres below the summit in bad weather means you're going to get frostbite, and it could go through to death. He would have been aware of that'

Peter Hillary



New Zealander Rob Hall with his wife Jan Arnold after they climbed Everest together in 1993. Hall is believed to have died near the summit at the weekend

Doomed climber's final call



Seaborn Beck Weathers in Kathmandu after being rescued

ROB HALL knew he was probably going to die on Everest, he and his party were trapped at 25,200ft, frostbitten, without a tent or sleeping bag and almost no oxygen, fluids or food.

On Saturday night, the New Zealander picked up the radio as bad weather closed in, called the radio operator and asked to be put through to his pregnant wife.

Only she knows exactly what he said, though friends later came on the line and encouraged him, telling him he was going to be okay. "He said: 'Hey, look, don't worry

about me," said his assistant Madeleine David, from New Zealand.

A climbing colleague painted a bleaker picture. "A bivouac without equipment 150 metres below the summit in bad weather means at the very least you're going to get frostbite, and it could go right through to death," said Peter Hillary, son of Sir Edmund, last night. "He would have been aware of that."

Now Hall, who had climbed the mountain five times, is assumed dead, along with eight other climbers from three separate expeditions. After one of the worst weekends in the history of climbing on the mountain, the recorded death toll stands at 67.

Those attempting Everest

expect to face sheer rock faces and treacherous ice, but the mountain's fatal distraction is the weather, which can close in quickly and leave competent climbers stranded and helpless.

There is a two-week window of opportunity in May, when wind, temperature and snow are at their friendliest. But the "season" carries no guarantees and when a blizzard struck the summit on Friday, Hall would have known that there was only a slim chance of escape. His wife, who had climbed Everest with him three years ago, would have known too.

With Hall was fellow New Zealander Andrew Harris, who also perished. They were leading an expedition of pay-

ing clients organised by New Zealand firm Adventure Consultants. "Two guides have lost their lives, and two clients," Hall's assistant Madeleine David said from the firm's headquarters in Christchurch, New Zealand.

One of the two other victims from the New Zealand expedition was Yasuko Namba, aged 47, who recently had become the second Japanese woman to conquer Everest.

Also dead is Douglas Hansen, an American, aged 44. Unconfirmed reports say that Hall might have survived had he not lagged behind to care for the severely ill Hansen as the group made their way to safety.

It is being suggested that

another American who died, Scott Fischer, who was in charge of a party from his company Mountain Madness, may also have perished attempting to rescue another climber.

His own clients returned safely to base camp but Fischer was found late on Friday night in a coma and attached to a rope, apparently having made a vain attempt to rescue a Taiwanese climber who was not a member of his group. Three Indian climbers also died.

Others were luckier. Nepali rescuers airlifted two severely frostbitten climbers to Nepal's capital Kathmandu by helicopter yesterday but reported that there were still about 50 climbers in 11 expe-

ditions on the mountain, although they appeared to be safe.

Six other clients from Hall's party, one guide and two Sherpas, made it to a camp lower down the mountain. One person from the group — an American, Seaborn Beck Weathers, a 49-year-old Dallas pathologist who scaled Everest on Friday — was airlifted to Kathmandu yesterday with severe frostbite.

Also lifted out with frostbite was Taiwan's Ming-Ho Gau, a 47-year-old photographer from Taipei, who led a five-member expedition to the summit on Friday. Both men were in critical condition, rescuers said, though Weathers was able to speak of his ordeal last night.

Sara Thornton 'a violent liar'

Prosecution at retrial alleges cash motive for killing husband

SARA THORNTON, accused of killing her husband almost seven years ago, broke down in tears yesterday as the jury at her retrial heard her described as a pathological liar with an alcohol problem who committed murder out of "financial considerations".

The retrial was ordered by the Court of Appeal last December. Thornton, 41, denies murdering her husband in June 1989.

Brian Escott-Cox, QC, prosecuting, told the jury at Oxford crown court that alcohol featured prominently in the relationship between Sara and Malcolm Thornton, which became violent within months of their meeting at a pub in 1987.

The jury of eight men and four women was told by Mr Justice Scott Baker: "This case is in fact a retrial ordered by the Court of Appeal but it is the evidence in this court that you have to consider."

Mr Escott-Cox told the

in a London clinic in 1988 but had begun drinking heavily once again, losing his job and driving licence.

Two days before the murder, a day which Mr Escott-Cox referred to as "the Sunday from hell", the Thorntons had been arguing. Sara Thornton, who was preparing a meal, threatened her husband with a knife, said Mr Escott-Cox.

After being disarmed by her stepson, Martin, Thornton then fed her husband chicken which had been spiked with six tablets of Moganon.

The court heard that on the night of her husband's death, Thornton had gone for a drink with Martin, Mr Thornton's son by his first marriage. She had scribbled on the bedroom dressing table mirror with lipstick: "Bastard Thornton. I hate you."

The jury heard that when Thornton arrived home she found her husband asleep on the sofa. She went into the kitchen and took a knife from a drawer. "The knife was large and sharp and well pointed. About six inches went into his (Mr Thornton's) body just below the rib cage on the left hand side. She stood over him and plunged the knife into him."

Mr Escott-Cox told the court that the killing was prompted by financial considerations. He said: "Sara Thornton had a fixation, that if she left Malcolm before being married to him for a year she would lose her interest in the house."

The jury was also told that Mr Thornton was expecting a large sum of money after working in Saudi Arabia and that his wife planned to forge his signature to obtain it.

Thornton allegedly told a number of close friends that she planned to kill her husband, the court was told.

Mr Escott-Cox said that while attending a work conference, Thornton told Helen Thomas, a colleague who is to give evidence at the trial, "The only way to sort this out is to kill him."

On the day of the murder, Thornton met a taxi driver friend and the two went for a drink. She allegedly told him, "I'll knife the bastard," referring to her husband.

The court heard evidence for the prosecution from Henry Popper, Thornton's father. He claimed that he briefly met his daughter at his Devon home days before the murder and she appeared "happy and bouncing."

The hearing continues.

Teaching union forces climbdown over return of 'violent' pupil

PETER HETHERINGTON

GOVERNMENT procedures for dealing with disruptive pupils were thrown into further chaos last night when a teaching union forced a local education authority to back down over the re-admission of an allegedly violent boy.

The National Association of Schoolmasters' Union of Women Teachers claimed victory after a day of negotiations by keeping 13-year-old Graham Cram out of a classroom at Hebburn Comprehensive school, on South Tyneside — in spite of a ruling by an independent appeals panel, backed by the local director of education, that he should return to "normal" lessons.

The union, angered that the school's decision to expel the boy had been overturned by the panel, claimed Graham was a threat to teachers' safety. He is alleged to have punched a teacher last July.

School governors and the head teacher, facing strike



Graham Cram arrives at Hebburn Comprehensive school, South Tyneside, yesterday with his father, Peter

action if any NASUWT members were forced to teach the boy, met the union's general secretary, Nigel de Gruchy, for four hours yesterday. Thirty minutes after police warned Graham's father, Peter, to leave the school, Mr de Gruchy emerged triumphant as head teacher Madeleine Watson attempted to supervise a "personal education programme" with a supply teacher, away from other pupils.

"We have struck a blow for

the maintenance of sensible discipline and the protection of teachers and other pupils against violence," Mr de Gruchy said. He revealed that the union would take a further secret ballot to prepare for strike action if this proved necessary in the future.

"That's good news for everyone and hopefully for the youngster concerned. His interests have not been very well served by all the publicity his father is managing to achieve for him."

But South Tyneside's education director, Ian Reid, challenged the union's call for the abolition of the independent appeals panels, which was introduced as the Government devolved power to schools. While Gillian Shephard, the Education Secretary, was reviewing the work of the panels, he said, "natural justice" would still require the right of appeal to an independent body.

Ms Watson said she had not refused to re-admit the boy, but members of the NASUWT had refused to teach him. "I have worked personally with the pupil this morning. I am prepared to continue... pending further consultation with the local education authority, the governing body and parents."

The day began with the boy's father, 58-year-old Peter Cram, insisting that he would not tolerate his son being taught in isolation from other pupils — a compromise reached early last December after a panel ruled against the school and said the boy should be readmitted to school.

He later accepted his son could not immediately return to class, but denied he had backed down. "I have never refused one-to-one tuition... I have just got to wait, day by day, and see what happens. I want what's best for Graham." He still threatens unspecified legal action.

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Government backs idea of parallel discussions 'Separate' Ulster arms talks mooted

Patrick Wintour and David Sharrock

THE Government is privately backing the idea of separating the issue of decommissioning paramilitary weapons from the main talks on the future of Northern Ireland on June 10.

The call for separate, but parallel talks on paramilitary weapons was first made by the Irish foreign minister, Dick Spring, last month, but is winning cautious private support from the Northern Ireland Secretary, Sir Patrick Mayhew, as well as Labour spokesman Mo Mowlam.

Gerry Adams, the Sinn Fein president, yesterday played down speculation of an early reinstatement of the IRA ceasefire. But British ministers are eager to set ground rules for the June 10 talks in such a way that negotiations on decommissioning would not block progress. They also recognise that the issue cannot be independent of the main political talks.

Before the start of all-party talks, ministers want to discuss with all the main parties how the talks would be held, including whether they would all be in the same room, and how they would be required to honour the six principles of the Mitchell Commission, the pre-condition for talks.

Ministers believe that it will not be necessary for individual Northern Ireland politicians to sign up to the Mitchell principles, but instead for the political parties to do so. David Trimble, the Ulster Unionist leader, insists his party will not speak to Sinn Fein until it not only agrees to the Mitchell principles, but does so in a way that they are seen to be honoured.

Ministers also want prior agreement on the agenda. In the face of conflicting signals from Sinn Fein, the Government appears unclear whether the IRA will announce the restoration of the ceasefire before the talks, but is stressing that proven restoration after the start will still allow Sinn Fein to take its place at the negotiating table.

Northern Ireland ministers are also planning to publish a bill on the decommissioning of arms before the talks. The bill would provide an amnesty for those who hand over arms, but not for those who have committed crimes.

The mood lifted in Northern Ireland yesterday after a warmer reaction by Sinn Fein to a new overture from Sir Patrick.

He said both governments hoped there would be genuine discussions on an open agenda "with nothing pre-ordained, nothing ruled out, nothing ruled in... It's just as important that that should be made clear as it is important that the issue of decommissioning has got to be addressed".

After Sir Patrick had apparently downgraded the importance of a surrender of IRA weapons, Sinn Fein's chairman, Mitchel McLaughlin, gave it a cautious welcome. He told Irish radio that if John Major gave the same reassurance "then I think we would know there is a potential for doing business".



Irish foreign minister Dick Spring with Sir Patrick Mayhew yesterday. PHOTOGRAPH BY SEAN SMITH

Lloyd Webber walks into court show stopper

Nick Varley

THE composer Sir Andrew Lloyd Webber has failed in an attempt to bring the curtain down on a rambling show in which he is the unwilling star.

More than 20 years after moving to Sydnampton Court, an 18th century mansion near Basingstoke, Hampshire, he grew tired of walkers using a footpath through the estate and coming within 50 metres of his home, which is near Watership Down. But his five-year battle to reroute them was lost yesterday.

Ron Amblin, the government inspector who conducted the two-day public inquiry, decided that re-routing the footpath — which dates from at least 1789, according to campaigners — would be a loss to the public. "The provision of better distant views does not balance the loss of limited close views of listed buildings," he said.

The footpath commands close-up views of three Grade II listed buildings on the Lloyd Webber estate. But walkers also come across the composer's guests, accommodation in a cardboard box outside Broadcasting House, while the BBC is now in the grip of the "hand of Bland", its new chairman, Sir Christopher.

But today Mr Wogan, best known for lampooning the efforts of Norwegians in the Eurovision Song Contest, lets fly at the "incompetence" of the BBC, claiming it sacrificed his reputation for the £10 million soap Eldorado.

The BBC had refused to let him give up his thrice-weekly television chat show a year before it was dropped in 1992, then it "sacrificed me for Eldorado which allowed the press to say 'Wogan axed'. I felt peeved by the insensitivity — no, incompetence — with which it was handled", he says in an interview in the Radio Times, published today.

"But what kind of fool am I to expect competence from a huge monolith?" He admits a sense of satisfaction when Eldorado was also deemed a flop and axed after less than a year.

The Redbus idea of education, information and entertainment had been sold down the river in favour of instant success, trivial light entertainment, soap operas, sitcoms and quiz games, according to the former Blankety Blank host, aged 57.

concerned about his guests having to "mingle with the public. He was also worried about security, but if people want to do something nasty, they don't need a footpath."

Sir Andrew was said to be disappointed by the decision, but his staff denied that it was he who really wanted the path moved. Estate manager Jonathan Webber said in a statement: "This was a Hampshire county council scheme which the Lloyd Webbers supported, as they had been convinced by the council that the proposal would open up significant areas of Watership Down to walkers and other users."

But Harvey Davis, council rights-of-way manager, said: "The application was not investigated by the council. We are obliged under the Highways Act of 1980 to examine any application from a land owner."

The estimated £7,000 cost of the inquiry will be met by the council, with Sir Andrew paying for the professional witnesses his legal team, led by Jeremy Sullivan QC, called.

Protester David Ramm, who has sold 3,000 copies of a book which includes the walk around Sydnampton Court, said: "If we had lost this it would have been terrible. [Sir Andrew] is only a guardian of the estate. He can't take it with him when he's gone."

Wogan attacks 'incompetent' BBC during Eldorado saga

Andrew Cull
Media Correspondent

UNTIL now Terry Wogan's criticisms of the BBC had been confined to gentle mocking of its chairman on his Radio 2 show.

Marmaduke Russey had been caricatured as living in a cardboard box outside Broadcasting House, while the BBC is now in the grip of the "hand of Bland", its new chairman, Sir Christopher.

But today Mr Wogan, best known for lampooning the efforts of Norwegians in the Eurovision Song Contest, lets fly at the "incompetence" of the BBC, claiming it sacrificed his reputation for the £10 million soap Eldorado.

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ITV grounds duchess's Budgie the Helicopter

THE Duchess of York's finances dealt another blow yesterday when ITV confirmed it had turned down plans for a fourth cartoon series of Budgie the Little Helicopter.

The ITV Network Centre said the third series of the cartoon based on her children's book, which was shown last winter, had flopped in the ratings. Programmers had decided it was time to "freshen up" the afternoon schedule.

Earlier this year in the United States the duchess signed a multi-million pound deal based on future earnings from the cartoon character designed to restore her finances. The duchess, soon to be divorced from the Duke of York, is thought to have debts of several million pounds.

A spokeswoman for ITV said: "The last series was not as successful as the other two in terms of numbers watching, but it's been up against stiff competition from other programmes and there are lots of factors involved. We might take it up again some time in the future."

The duchess's office said she had no comment to make on the decision. Sleepy Kids, the company which markets and distributes the Budgie programmes and merchandise, played down the blow.

A spokesman said: "Rarely does an animation series get commissioned year after year, and we are confident that ITV will be looking for a fourth series in 1997."

"Some of today's leading classic shows generated very few commissioned episodes in their early years whereas Budgie, after only two years, has already accumulated 89 11-minute episodes."


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Anglo-French missile giant

Paul Webster in Paris

B RITAIN and France agreed to set up Europe's biggest military missile firm yesterday, on the eve of President Jacques Chirac's British state visit which is expected to lead to other military or defence accords.

News that British Aerospace and Matra-Défense were merging their missile production units to create an industry with a £1 billion annual turnover, coincided with a decision to cut the French defence budget. Mr

Chirac is likely to encourage more joint research and development to slash the French budget deficit and meet the European Union's single currency criteria.

Military co-operation between Britain and France has been made easier by his decision to reintegrate France into Nato's supreme command.

Matra-Défense appears to have persuaded its British partners that the head office should be in Paris, although the two companies will have a 50-50 share. But there has been no announcement about the chief executive.

French arms firms have been hit by a drop in export

sales, domestic cutbacks and decisions to reduce orders because of a move to an all-professional army in 2001. The merger means the French will be able to offer their technol-

missile. The urgency of finding new markets for French military technology was underlined during yesterday's cabinet meeting which decided to cut defence spend-

ing by about 20 billion francs (£2.5 billion) over the next six years.

The government spokesman, Alain Lamassoure, said France intended to encourage defence industry mergers in Europe so that they could face

their American rivals. He said nuclear policy would be based on an increasing dialogue with Britain, Germany and the United States.

Despite plans to cut defence forces by more than a third with an end to conscription, Mr Lamassoure said that France could send up to 50,000 men to future engagements. His promise followed difficulties in providing effective French forces in the Gulf war and former Yugoslavia.

Less than half of the new defence budget will be spent on new weapons, but none of the development programmes decided before Mr Chirac was elected last year is being

abandoned. The programmes include spending on four nuclear submarines, and new missiles equipped with warheads tested during nuclear experiments in the Pacific.

But other programmes are likely to be slowed down, including equipping the air force with Rafale jets and the army with Leclerc tanks.

● The Kuwaiti newspaper al-Watan has reported that Kuwait is to buy more than \$100 million worth of British Sea Skua naval missiles in preference to French weapons.

City notebook, page 11; Defence in focus, page 12

Chirac is likely to encourage more joint development, to slash his budget deficit

ogy in a bid for three big British arms programmes. These concern an air-to-ground cruise missile for Tornados and British Eurofighters; an air-to-air missile with a range of about 80 miles; and a helicopter-mounted anti-tank

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Embassy plays host to London taxis designed for Parisians

Paul Webster in Paris

B RITAIN'S embassy in the French capital is turning its courtyard and gardens into a miniature motor show today for the city's taxi drivers, in an attempt to get them to trade in their saloons for London-style cabs.

After a five-year battle to meet French regulations and overcome the hostility of some cab companies, an almost standard LTI model made in Coventry drove to the Eiffel Tower yesterday as a prelude to the marketing operation by a British importer, David Lea. Three of the vehicles will be on display at the embassy.

As curious Parisians gathered around the demonstration model, Mr Lea, an automobile engineer from Cardiff, said he was the idea "when a friend of mine couldn't go to a football match because no [Paris] taxis could take his wheelchair".

Because there is no similar French vehicle available, 100 licences have been offered by the Paris authorities for owner-drivers ready to operate the vehicles immediately.

"The biggest advantage as far as I'm concerned is the small turning circle," a French driver said. "You can't do a quick U-turn in my Mercedes."

But he was taken aback by the Fr210,000 (£28,000) price for a basic LTI. Even so, the first 150 are expected to be on the road within a year, with another 1,350 to follow before the end of the century.



Making a mark... A London-style taxi arrives in Paris yesterday, after a five-year battle to meet French regulations to capture a lucrative market

Ministry claims Croatia faces European snub

David Hearst in Moscow and Richard Norton-Taylor

RUSSIA'S ministry of foreign affairs last night admitted for the first time that one of its middle-ranking diplomats was a spy who allegedly passed state secrets to British diplomats.

A high-ranking ministry official told the Russian news agency Interfax: "To our greatest regret there was a black sheep in the family."

The spy affair, which broke a week ago with the news that the Federal Security Service (FSB) was demanding the expulsion of nine people on the British diplomatic list in Moscow, has since lapsed into silence, amid signs that a face-saving compromise is on the table.

In London, officials were anxious not to upset what appear to be delicate, but so far inconclusive, talks.

"Discussions are continuing," a Foreign Office spokesman said.

There is speculation that Russia may insist on fewer than half of the nine diplomats mentioned by the FSB being expelled immediately, with an understanding that the rest would be allowed to stay for longer periods.

Russian security sources have always distinguished between those loosely involved in the affair and the British officials to whom the Russian civil servant was allegedly passing secrets when arrested last month. This left open the possibility that only those directly involved would be immediately declared persona non grata and told to leave.

After the initial loud protest and threat of retaliatory action from the Foreign Office, there has been no comment from the British embassy in Moscow, other than to say negotiations are continuing. An embassy spokesman refused to confirm whether any of the nine

named by the FSB had already left Russia.

Yesterday, an unnamed foreign ministry official spoke of the colleague now under arrest as though his guilt had been established. "He is quite a young man, a middle-rank diplomat who had good prospects for the future," he said.

The official added that, so far as the future was concerned, "necessary conclusions" would have to be drawn. He said: "We are not talking about a witch-hunt, but we are not going to pretend that nothing has happened."

This may mean that the easy and informal access British diplomats have enjoyed over the past five years to low-ranking Russian government officials will end.

The vulnerability of the foreign affairs ministry to political attack from the FSB and the defence ministry led by the appointment of Yevgeny Primakov as foreign minister. Mr Primakov headed the Service of Foreign Intelligence (SVR), the successor body to the first directorate of the KGB, for four-and-a-half years before his present appointment.

The FSB confirmed yesterday that the IRA had tried to buy weapons from an Estonian paramilitary organisation and other groups.

However, a spokesman said Russia had no details of actual arms purchases made by the IRA.

The disclosure followed a report by the Har-Pass news agency last week that the FSB believed the IRA had bought sniper rifles, machine guns and explosives on the black market in Estonia.

The report, citing unnamed FSB sources, said the IRA bought the weapons from Kaitseleit, a paramilitary group that is part of Estonia's defence structure.

Estonia's ambassador to Russia has denied the report.

John Palmer in Brussels

CROATIA'S plans to join the Council of Europe seemed certain to be put on ice last night because of growing international concern about the Zagreb government's suppression of civil liberties and democracy.

European Union foreign ministers in Brussels were expected to call on the 38-country Council of Europe to reconsider the timetable for Croatia's membership, and to make it conditional on proof that the government has reversed curbs on the independent media and on elected opposition politicians.

A statement being prepared by the foreign ministers reiterated their support for the goal of eventual Croatian membership, which was approved by the Council of European Parliamentary assembly only last month. "A precise timetable should be established as regards the undertakings entered into by Croatia with a view to its accession," the statement declared.

EU endorsement of Cro-

atia's membership of the council had been thought a formality. But European governments have been angered at President Tudman's decision to dissolve the opposition-controlled Zagreb city council, elected earlier this year. They are also critical of the legal measures taken by the president against independent newspapers and broadcasting organisations.

Zagreb, taking account of Council of Europe recommendations" and a "guarantee" of "media freedom".

The former Yugoslav republics of Macedonia and Slovenia are already members of the Council of Europe. Bosnia-Herzegovina has "special guest" status and the rump Yugoslavia — Serbia and Montenegro — has not been admitted. Russia was ac-

any delay might lead to a delay in the elections in the rest of Bosnia, and that would be a disaster," the Italian foreign minister and president of the Council of Ministers, Susanna Agnelli, said last night.

The ministers were briefed on the tense situation in Mostar by the EU administrator for the city, Piero Casado. EU governments have repeatedly protested against actions by Croat extremists in Mostar, who are opposed to the unification of the city.

The meeting in Brussels also heard of the problems facing the Bosnia-wide election, due to be held by September 14. "The elections will not be perfect in view of the obstacles being placed in the way of refugees wishing to return home... but it is far better that we have imperfect elections than none at all," one EU diplomat said.

The German foreign minister, Klaus Kinkel, flew from Brussels to Belgrade last night to persuade President Slobodan Milosevic of Serbia to help turn over to the international court of justice in The Hague Bosnian Serbs accused of war crimes.

Ministers will work out a detailed plan to monitor Zagreb's civil liberties record

The editor of one Croatian satirical weekly paper faces a three-year prison sentence for "bringing the president into disrepute".

The ministerial committee of the Council of Europe will meet in Strasbourg later this week to work out a detailed plan for monitoring Croatia's record on civil liberties.

When the Croatian government applied for membership it gave 21 undertakings on human rights, including commitments "to pursue the procedure for electing a mayor of

any delay might lead to a delay in the elections in the rest of Bosnia, and that would be a disaster," the Italian foreign minister and president of the Council of Ministers, Susanna Agnelli, said last night.

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Turkish coalition in slush fund row

Alistair Bell in Ankara

A SCANDAL over £4.3 million missing from a secret government slush fund yesterday rocked Turkey's conservative coalition government, already reeling from infighting over a string of corruption charges.

A cabinet member accused the prime minister, Mesut Yilmaz, of trying to discredit his coalition partner, Tansu Ciller, by revealing to the press details of her use of the fund during her recent term as prime minister.

"Only the prime minister or his adviser has access to this kind of secret document. It couldn't have come from a

third person," said Yalim Erez, the trade and industry minister and a close colleague of Mrs Ciller.

Mr Yilmaz has not commented on the allegation.

Turkish newspapers at the weekend gave wide coverage to a leaked document purporting to show that Mrs Ciller had taken £4.3 million from the fund, intended mostly for shadowy security operations, a couple of weeks before she handed over power to Mr Yilmaz in March.

The two conservative leaders have been at loggerheads in recent weeks over Mr Yilmaz's backing for parliamentary inquiries into corruption charges against Mrs Ciller.

An increasingly beleaguered Mrs Ciller has acknowledged delving into the fund, but says interests of national security prevent her from divulging what she did with the money. She suggested it may have gone towards the fight against Kurdish rebels, or security activities involving Turkey's neighbours.

"Look at terrorism. Look around us at Iran, Azerbaijan, Chechnya and Greece," she was quoted by the Turkish press as saying to justify her withdrawal of the cash.

Mrs Ciller's True Path Party has gone to the verge of quitting the coalition twice in as many weeks after Mr Yilmaz's Motherland Party helped the Islamist opposition

to set up two separate corruption inquiries against her.

Mrs Ciller says the charges are an attempt to ruin her hopes of becoming prime minister again next year under a power-sharing deal with Mr Yilmaz.

A security court is to investigate how the press got hold of the slush fund document, which clearly shows Mrs Ciller vouching for the money under "secret service expenditures".

"Giving away state secrets is a crime," said Cevdet Volkan, the chief prosecutor at the Ankara state security court. But he refused to say if the court would investigate claims that Mr Yilmaz was behind the leak. — *Reuters*.

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World news in brief

Communist drops out of PM race

INDIA'S veteran communist leader, Jyoti Basu, yesterday bowed out of the contest for the prime ministership. Last night leaders of the National Front-Left Front alliance appealed to him to reconsider. The octogenarian, who has been chief minister of West Bengal for nearly 20 years, had been viewed as the leading candidate of the alliance.

The Communist Party's central committee said in a statement that the party would offer only external support to any government that did not include the Hindu nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party, or the rump of the Congress Party.

The BJP, which emerged as the largest single party after last week's election, has said it wants to form the next government, and several Indian newspapers yesterday condemned as undemocratic efforts to keep it out.

P. V. Narasimha Rao, meanwhile, is gauging support among the left and regional parties for his possible return as prime minister. — *Suzanne Goldenberg, New Delhi*.

Soldiers held after road death

OFFICIALS of the British military bases in Cyprus said two Austrian United Nations peacekeepers were yesterday detained at the bases for questioning in connection with the apparent hit-and-run death of a Bulgarian farm worker.

Gantchev Kirkov, aged 32, was found dead in the early hours of yesterday near the south-eastern resort town of Ayia Napa. He had been knocked off a bicycle.

"The soldiers are being held by SBA (Sovereign Base Area) police and UN police are in attendance," said a spokesman.

The soldiers, based in the Turkish-occupied town of Famagusta, were stopped by British officers two hours after the body was found. "The windscreen of their car was smashed and it appeared to have been involved in a car accident," said Stellos Neofytou of the Cyprus police. — *Reuters, Nicosia*.

Food crisis worsening fast

THE FOOD crisis in North Korea is deepening faster than expected, the United Nations warned yesterday.

A six-page report by the World Food Programme and the Food and Agriculture Organisation said most of last year's harvest had been consumed. Food stocks were very low in the country, which Japanese officials say has asked informally for food aid.

All reports from North Korea indicate widespread shortages in large parts of the country," the WFP said, adding that the Pyongyang government had reduced rations sharply.

"The situation is likely to become considerably worse in the lean months between May and September... significant commercial imports are unlikely and there is virtually no further food assistance in the pipeline," the report added. It was made available as envoys from the United States, South Korea and Japan prepared for talks in Rome on plans to bring North Korea out of isolation. — *Reuters, Rome*.

Investigators find engines

ACCIDENT investigators yesterday found the engines of the DC-9 that plunged into the Florida Everglades on Saturday, killing 109 people, but admitted they had no idea how to go about recovering the rest of the wreckage from the dense, alligator-infested swamp.

As divers groped their way through mud and sawgrass crabs with fuel, navy sonar experts joined the hunt for the flight data recorders, which it is hoped will offer a clue to why the aircraft filled with smoke minutes after leaving Miami for Atlanta.

As the first remains of victims were taken to the Dade County medical examiner's office yesterday, the Federal Aviation Authority launched an intensive month-long safety investigation into ValuJet, the cut-price carrier which operated the 27-year-old plane. — *Jon Katz, New York*.

Post workers strike over cuts

ABOUT 1,000 postal workers staged warning strikes in six German cities yesterday to protest at deep spending cuts proposed by the government.

Delivery of about two million pieces of mail was delayed because of the action in Munich, Stuttgart, Saarbrücken, Heidelberg, Magdeburg and Berlin, union officials said.

As workers took to the streets with banners, talks resumed in Stuttgart on a new contract for 3.3 million public service employees, including postal workers. The government has proposed freezing salaries for two years, and cuts in sick pay and holiday benefits, as part of a DM55 billion squeeze. — *AP, Bonn*.

Extradition request refused

FRANCE said yesterday it would not extradite a French defence industrialist, Serge Dassault, aged 71, to Belgium over an alleged bribery scandal but would respond to requests from Belgian authorities for information.

"We have signed and we will apply a convention of mutual European judicial assistance," the government spokesman, Alain Lamassoure, said after a cabinet meeting.

A judge in Liege issued an international arrest warrant last week for Mr Dassault, chairman of Dassault Aviation, one of the country's top aircraft makers, in connection with bribes allegedly paid to Belgian government officials in 1989 to win a contract. He has denied any involvement in the affair. — *Reuters, Paris*.

New cabinet posts go to ANC



NELSON MANDELA (above, with the Namibian president, Sam Nujoma, who is visiting South Africa) yesterday appointed four members of the African National Congress to the cabinet, including the recently-dismissed Dr Pallo Jordan, to fill gaps left by the National Party's withdrawal from the coalition government, writes David Beresford in Johannesburg.

Dr Jordan — whose sacking in a reshuffle last month after he had reportedly clashed with President Mandela on civil rights issues, stunned many in the ANC — gets environmental affairs and tourism. Two of the 27 ministerial posts have been axed, as a signal of the government's commitment to austerity.

The other appointments are Geraldine Fraser-Moleketi (welfare and population development), Mohammed Valli Moosa (provincial affairs and constitutional development) and Pennell Maduna (mineral and energy affairs).

Rothko stayed less than three days: he did not work in Cornwall and he never went back. His being there is what mattered

Adrian Searle visits St Ives

Arts G2 page 8

Handwritten Arabic text at the bottom of the page.



Naked terror... Fighters with the Ullmo-K militia threaten captives from a rival group in Monrovia yesterday. It is violence and intimidation such as this that the refugees on ships like the Bulk Challenger are fleeing

Refugees go ashore in Ghana

Agencies in Takoradi and Abidjan

THOUSANDS of Liberian war refugees were allowed on to dry land yesterday after spending a week stranded on a freighter and refused refuge in west African ports. But their landfall looked temporary.

The 4,000 people fleeing violence in Liberia aboard the Nigerian freighter Bulk Challenger were allowed off the ship in the Ghanaian port of Takoradi only under heavy military guard, and were being held in quayside tents, witnesses said.

Reefe, was yesterday reported to be moving closer to the harbour in Sierra Leone's capital, Freetown, and was barred from docking. It is carrying Liberians and people from Sierra Leone. Aid workers say food and water on board has run out.

The UNHCR says there are more than 750,000 Liberian refugees currently in other countries in the region - including 410,000 in Guinea, 305,000 in Ivory Coast, 15,000 in Ghana, 4,700 in Sierra Leone and 4,000 in Nigeria.

Malay party on lonely crusade for Islam

Nick Cumming-Bruce reports from Kota Baru on a state trying to block modernising reforms

THE FILM *Marisa Marianna* may be Malaysia's "sensation 1996". In practice, the matter is fully obscured by the face of its glamorous women stars on promotional posters at the Lido here.

Malaysia, like its larger neighbour, Indonesia, takes a moderate approach to enforcing Islamic law, deliberately striving to balance the sensitivities of the Muslim Malay majority with those of its Chinese and Indian communities.

slender majority in the state assembly looks threatened. Dr Mahathir, a Muslim moderniser who is intent on industrialising Malaysia by 2020, would like nothing better before the Umno convention in October than to win back the only state to fall to the opposition.



However, he evidently feels he is walking a domestic and international tightrope. Muslim academics in Kuala Lumpur say the wave of Islamic revivalism in Malaysia during the 1980s appears to have lost some momentum in the economic boom of the 1990s, but conservative Muslim leaders remain influential in rural areas that provide the traditional bedrock of Umno support.

Advertisement

THE MESSAGE OF THE LEADER OF THE MUSLIM UMMAH Ayatollah al-Udhma KHAMENEI ON THE AUSPICIOUS OCCASION OF HAJJ 1416/1996

In the name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful

All praise be to Allah, the Lord of all the worlds, and salutations to the sayyid of the first and the last, Muhammad al-Mustafa and his noble household, and upon the Baqiyatullah fil ardhain, Imam Mahdi.

Hajj (Pilgrimage), this ever-flowing fountain of piety and spirituality, goodness and blessings shall supply the Islamic world every year. Each and every fortunate Muslim (individual and congregations) can relate to its abundant favours and draw benefits from it in proportion to their capacities and capabilities. The pilgrims of Kabaa (Baitullah al-Haram) are not the only ones who can satisfy their thirst at this bountiful fountain. If this great obligation is truly recognised and properly carried out, then all Muslim nations and individuals will be able to witness the world being flooded by its blessing.

Harm has always come to individuals and communities from two quarters. The first is that which comes from within themselves due to human weakness, uncontrolled desires, irresolution, lack of faith and other destructive traits. The second is that which comes from the oppression on mankind by enemies who are rebellious, have arrogant wishes and are of aggressive and devouring nature, they make life unbearable and miserable for their victims and suppress them upon it. The Islamic world, both as individuals and nations, have always been exposed to these two kinds of threats. Today they are being threatened more than ever before by deliberately propagating corruption in Islamic countries, imposing Western culture on them and spread it by means of certain dependent regimes. That effects not only individual behaviours, but also influences many aspects of life from architecture to general living conditions to radio, television and the print media on the one hand and military, political and economic pressures on Muslim countries on the other. This is coupled with human massacres as in Lebanon, Palestine, Bosnia, Kashmir, Chechnya and Afghanistan. These are glaring examples of the two kinds of threats directed against the Muslim communities.

The pilgrimage is like an ever-flowing river, divinely granted, at the banks of which Muslims may always wash from their faces the dust of hardship and suffering, pollution and malaise and overcome the two vulnerabilities at all times. In the performance of Hajj, the elements of piety, remembrance, presence, submission and absorption in God Almighty, shall serve to remove the first threat, while the feelings of togetherness, unity and cementing the enormity and strength of the great Islamic ummah, which Hajj is crowning symbol, will tackle the second. The immunity and resistance of individual Muslims and Muslim

nations shall increase as these two aspects of Hajj are strengthened. However, if one or both become weak or extinct, then the Islamic ummah as individuals, nations and states will become more vulnerable.

In the texts of the holy shar'ah of Islam and in the Holy Quran, sufficient emphasis is laid upon both these aspects of Hajj. There shall be no doubt whatsoever about them for those with seeing eyes and unbiased heart.

Along with the command in (2:200): "Then laud Allah as you lauded your father, rather a greater lauding, there is an order in (9:3): "And an announcement from Allah and His Apostle to the people on the day of the greatest pilgrimage that Allah and His Apostle are free from liability to the idolaters, together with the divine wisdom explained in (22:37): "There does not reach Allah their flesh nor their blood, but to Him is acceptable the guardian on their part, thus He made them subservient to you that you may magnify Allah because He has guided you aright, and given good news to those who do good (to others)." backed up by the hope in (22:38): "That they may witness advantages for them."

Any recommendation, propagation or endeavor in the direction of weakening or abandoning these two aspects of Hajj is a contradiction with the verses and injunction of the Holy Quran. There is no lesser task to be undertaken than allowing the teachings and the guidance of Islam, which are vital, eternal, invaluable provisions for Muslims in the whole of humanity, to fall into oblivion through the negligence or ignorance of their religious, political leaders and to deprive people from their benefits. Hajj is an ever-lasting valuable reserve of that kind, and it is obligatory upon all Muslims to get to know it better and exploit it more deeply for the good of the Islamic Ummah.

Today, the Islamic world is faced with certain extremely threatening problems. Muslims should strive to remove them through the power of faith, struggling, reliance on God, sublime sacrifices and with open eyes to utilize the reserved potentials deposited by the Almighty in this straight forward religion. If they do not, then their arrogant enemies who are equipped with political and military power and technology will lighten their burden. Thereby further encroaching the days of freedom and salvation in the Islamic countries, not only for decades but for centuries. It is an ever-lasting valuable reserve of that kind, and it is obligatory upon all Muslims to get to know it better and exploit it more deeply for the good of the Islamic Ummah.

Today, after the establishment of the Islamic Republic of Iran, and an Islamic reawakening in many Islamic countries, numerous facts of bitter or sweet nature are known and great numbers of people in the Islamic world are able to properly analyse events around them and to understand the realities of their situations. Yet it must be admitted that the bewitching influence of radios, televisions and print media, often run by Zionists, their Western allies and certain seethingly atomistic elements who

behave as servants of the arrogant powers, are perpetually engaged in distorting the truth. It may therefore be propitious here to give a brief summary of the problems facing the Islamic world as well as the potentials and possibilities at the service of world Muslims.

As far as potentials are concerned, we must, first of all, make mention of the numerical strength of over one billion Muslims throughout the world that embraces some fifty countries and extends from the Pacific Ocean upon the Atlantic Ocean. This great ummah includes nations well-known for their talents and intelligence, some civilizations that go back a few thousand years, and great individuals in the fields of science and politics. This great part of the world's population, better known as the Islamic ummah, possess a very rich culture and an everlasting heritage that brilliantly shines in history, and it does enjoy, despite its great gravity, an amazing unity installed in all its component parts and particles. These single hearted, brother nations of the same divine book that explains all the truths and contains the order for all their needs and obligations.

"And We have sent down to you the Book explaining everything, a guide, a mercy and glad tidings to those who believe in it with sincerity and devotion. The geographical location of this great ummah is perhaps the richest region of the world in natural resources, with the single commodity or oil being the support and sustenance of today's industrial civilization; and if the ummah were to stop, for only a few months the flow of oil to its customers, the larger part of the world, especially those countries whose governments have for centuries made the Islamic nations the victims of their greed and arrogance, shall face a dark, cold and hopeless prospect. A complete list of all the potentials of the Islamic ummah would embrace hundreds of other outstanding topics in fields ranging from culture, politics, economics to social, material and historical contributions that any researcher with some insight will be able to discover.

Now we turn to the big problems that this great part of humanity, the Islamic ummah, is today facing. poverty and glaze made it highly impossible for such a great, rich and gifted portion of mankind to exploit its exceptional, practical potentials, which has left the Islamic countries behind the scenes of scientific advancement, deprived them of their own abundant, material wealth, subjected them to foreign cultures, subjected them to others on the basis of their religious, political, militarily imposed them to aggressions and aggressive policies of arrogant powers.

These problems, that are mainly caused by negligence, mismanagement or treacherous behaviour of elements within the Islamic ummah, would form a long list; they could, however, be briefly categorized under the following headings:

- Sectarian conflicts, mainly publicised and intensified by evil ulama and paid writers.
- Ethnic and national conflicts, emanating from chauvinistic tendencies, the fires of which are often fanned by dependent, subservient intellectuals.
- Submissiveness towards interventionist powers, turning certain governments into satellite states of the big powers.
- Surrendering to the corrupt culture of the West and even helping to spread it for their own political and despotic standards against them.
- The indifference of certain governments to their own people or their disregard of people's needs, beliefs and aspirations, and taking up despotic standards against them.
- A dread of the arrogant powers, particularly of the United States, on the part of some political, cultural leaders in the Islamic world.
- The presence of the usurper, Zionist regime in the heart of Islamic region, that is the root cause of many other difficulties.
- Promoting secularism and introducing Islam as an abstract experience for individuals that has nothing to do with questions relating to people's lives such as government, politics, economic management, etc.

These and scores of other problems

equally grave, though with historical roots mostly, were solvable if the religious and political leaders had shown any sincerity, determination and independence. They are the source of the present predicament of the Islamic world, bringing in their wake poverty, backwardness, ignorance, superstition, prejudice, discrimination, political servility, war and destruction.

The point is that if Hajj were held rightly and as commanded by God, it is capable of remedying all the major maladies and causes of the Islamic world, no all of a sudden but gradually in the course of several long years. This gathering of millions of brothers and sisters from all over the Islamic world as a single place, and that too at the scene of observance of spiritual rites performed in unison under the majestic banner of Tawhid, with refreshed memories of the early years of Islam, of the banies of Badr and Uhud, and the pilgrims presence in the (Prophet's) Mosque within whose walls still reverberate the animating revelations of the Quran as pronounced by the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and his family, and the resounding cries of "Allahu Akbar" of the first warriors of Islam, in an atmosphere charged with zeal, application, and the sense of presence before God, the Almighty and the Glorious, which liberates human beings from their feeble, self-seeking, and crooked-minded self and unites them with the source of Divine majesty, greatness and

power. This is a healing spring that lends strength to the heart, edifies the will and steadies the resolve, infusing confidence into the souls, broadening the horizons, bringing the aspirants closer, uniting the brothers, and disappointing the devil and defeating his guile.

Yes, a true and perfect Hajj, a Hajj worthy of "Tawhid", a Hajj that is the embodiment of the love of God and the faith, of the rejection of salaries, idols and idolaters, such as Hajj would first cure the ailments of the Islamic world, to become a source of honour for Islam and vigour for Muslims and of the independence of Islam from the evil of the aliens.

It was on the basis of such a correct view of the significance of Hajj that after the triumph of the great Islamic Revolution, the Islamic Republic of Iran, have laid top priority in the international agenda of the government of the Islamic Republic of Iran, this noble regime combined the religious, political and social, a manifestation of the Divine majesty and power, with its devotional aspect. A manifestation of the spirit of mercy and compassion, bringing the contemporary Hajj closer to the Hajj of the last hundred years, despite the disavowal of the polytheists (bar'ah min al-mushrikun) in Hajj as a symbol of this and it has pursued the objectives of the Islamic duty, despite all the political harassment and obstructive moves inspired by an Islamic-movements.

As a system that has affirmed the life, dynamism and power of Islam in administering human societies despite the anti-Islamic propaganda and efforts of the last hundred years, the Islamic Republic views Hajj not as a means to further its own goals, but as a forum for the awakening of Muslims and revitalization of the spirit of Godwardness and faith in the implementation of the Islamic Shar'ah as well as the spiritual and cultural independence of the world's Muslims.

Those who negate and reject the dynamic and comprehensive character of Hajj are in fact against the honour and independence of Muslims and their deliverance from the bloody claws of imperialism and Zionism. any such kind of Fatwa or religious decree is tantamount to giving a ruling in violation of God's revelations, and it derives most probably from ignorance of the realities of the world and its environs and a lack of adequate insight into the affairs of Muslims.

Today everyone who knows the plight of Muslim nations under the tyrannical domination of the United States, whoever is aware of the crimes of the Zionists and their convert co-sponsors against Muslim countries, whoever senses the danger of the growth of this malignant, cancerous tumour within the political and economic body of the regional States, whoever observes the gloomy conditions of the homeless Palestinians who suffer in refugee camps, seeing their country and homeland under the occupation of their oppressors, whoever is aware of the condition of South Lebanon, of its territories under Zionist occupation and its parts under perpetual threat of aggression, whoever has heard

about the recent catastrophic events in Lebanon, where the Zionists, now for the twelfth year and with the support of the US government, have been bombing more than half of that country from air, land and sea, massacring children, women and ordinary civilians, whoever is aware of Bosnia, Afghanistan, Kashmir, Tajikistan, and Chechnya, whoever knows about the successive hostile messengers of the squalid US regime and the anti-human Zionists against the Islamic Republic which today is the manifestation of the sovereignty of the Quran and the Islamic faith, whoever knows these facts and possesses a sense of Islamic honour and religious duty, will not doubt that to forego such a great opportunity as the Hajj and waste such a powerful God-given source of support to Islam and Muslims is to incur irreparable loss and commit an unforgivable sin.

The present weakness of Muslim states and the sorry disunity of the Islamic countries cannot be concealed or denied. Today the Arab world by its own deeds placed itself in such a condition that, regrettably, it is unable to defend the Lebanese people who are victims of the crimes of the usurper Zionist regime, and face, even for a single day, an enemy that has usurped its territory, while stockpiles of fighter planes and air defense equipment brought superpower cost from Western factories exist today in these countries. The sleekly bloody Zionists freely destroy the homes of Arab people and none of these governments is able to stop it. These bleak facts, along with the increased political influence of imperialist powers within many of these countries, as well as the unchecked offensive aimed at achieving a complete cultural invasion of these countries and many other regrettable and alarming events are sufficient to make every sane mind and wakeful conscience realise that Islamic countries and nations whose representatives sample is now present around the holy Kabaa and other sacred premises of this land of revelation, stand more than ever before, in greater need of the spirit and spirituality of Hajj and its abundant resources which it is essential for them to utilize. This is our viewpoint and thesis concerning Hajj and the other delivering sacraments of Islam.

It is for this very straightforward and bold stand in the defense of Islam and Islamic laws and the Islamic Republic, from the very beginning has been the target of the wrath and resentment of the imperialist powers with the US, the Big Satan at their head.

They accuse the Islamic Republic of lack of pursuing security and so to justify their malice and hostility in the eyes of the world's people and Muslim public opinion. Their malicious radios and media funded by the Zionists or by American and Western states are propagated from the Islamic countries against the Islamic Republic, incessantly broadcasting accusations, rumors, commensurates and biased and false reports against the Islamic Republic, meant to curtail the sanctity and popularity of the name of our late Imam, may Allah sanctify his soul. With the help of the most up to date propaganda techniques they try in an

unmanly manner to cast aspersions on the Islamic Republic and to turn away its supporters in the Islamic world. With their lies and slander, they are trying to raise a triumphant Islamic Iran and other Islamic countries, where they are afraid of the world's peoples, the leaders of the usurper Zionist regime and their terrorism. At the slightest pretext, the US and Israeli leaders are quick to raise recurring anger at the Islamic Republic and to mention in their political statements, after every few words, the sacred majestic and radiant name of Islamic Iran with resentment and rage.

It is a matter of pride for us that the world's infamous scoundrels and disgraced should hate us. We too regard their ugly character and polluted hands with disgust and resentment. God and His Messenger too hate and dislike them.

"Verily, God and His messenger resent the idolaters" (9:2)

Today with God's grace and despite the hostility and obstruction of the malevolent, the Islamic Republic marches onwards with power, honour and a steady resolve and determination as a stable country with an accelerating pace in the sciences and technology, with an administration that is power and close to the masses, with a deserved presence and repute in the world, with an Islamic faith in Islam, with its live and dynamic youth free from the grievous problem of the youth in many other countries with a people intelligent, brave and ready to defend Islam and Iran with an expansive spirituality side by side with growth and development and ultimately, with an extraordinary and rare solidarity among the citizens.

Thank God, the massive propaganda of the enemy serves us as the indicator of our increasing power and the greatness of our people and country.

At the end, I call upon all the dear pilgrims to make the fullest use of the opportunity provided by these great days and I invite all of them to contemplate upon Hajj and draw a spiritual provision for the rest of their lives. I ask the reverend clergymen to raise these issues in an appropriate manner in the gatherings of Iranian and non-Iranian Muslims and bring the spirituality of Hajj and its political message to the hearts and souls of the pilgrims.

Beseech God, the Exalted to grant honour to Islam and Muslims and grant real independence to Islamic countries, liberating them from the political and economic domination of the imperialists. I beseech the One Lord to preserve the majesty and the glory of Islamic Iran under the shelter of the special favour and attention of the 12th Imam, Baqiyatullah, may our souls be his ransom.

Peace be upon all our faithful brothers.

Ali al-Husayni al-Khamenei
4 Dhu al-Hijjah 1416
4 Ordibehesht 1375
23 April 1996

Hot air from British Gas

Why should price reduction lead to job cuts?

WHICH family wouldn't welcome a £30 cut to its annual gas bill — perhaps rising to a £50 saving in future years? Which government wouldn't want to boast about a privatisation, which could cut consumer charges in half in real terms within a decade? And which company wouldn't complain if it had been told to cut its prices by at least 20 per cent by a regulator? But be warned. The British Gas saga is almost as labyrinthian as the 170,000 miles of pipes linking 20 million British homes to the near monopoly supplier. Competition is coming but it too could end in tears, like the privatisation which exposed the greed of British Gas directors and the incompetence of its service maintenance department.

tions? British Gas may complain about the regulator but Clare Spottiswoode, director general of Ofgas, is only trying to recoup some of the savings which earlier (and ignored) MMC recommendations would have achieved.

The Gas Consumer Council was right to ask yesterday why it was taking so long to establish a proper price for the use of British Gas's monopoly pipeline system. Ms Spottiswoode, who has her fans in the media, is not without blame. Yet she was splendidly robust in dismissing the wrangles of the company reminding them that other utilities were being treated even more firmly by their regulators. It was time the gas industry was given tougher targets.

Of all the responses, none was more repellent than British Gas's knee-jerk reaction that the price reduction would mean a 50 per cent cut to TransCo's 20,000 workforce. This from a company, which has already shed 23,000 workers in the last three years, seen gas consumer complaints rise to such a record level that even the boss had to apologise last September, and yet still awarded its directors a 47 per cent pay increase in March. Philip Rogerson, British Gas's deputy chairman, symbolised what is wrong with British industry in his response. Even the regulator pointed to efficiencies which did not involve job cuts. But labour is still viewed as a cost, not as an investment by British industrialists. Jefferson said it all in his first inaugural address almost 200 years ago: "Still one thing more, fellow citizens — a wise and frugal government, which shall restrain men from injuring one another, which shall leave them otherwise free to regulate their own pursuits of industry and improvement, shall not take from the mouth of labor the bread it has earned."

Why is this Tory doctrine, which earlier Conservative ministers embraced, so unacceptable today?

A long way from flexible friends

All-party talks in Ulster depend on all sides showing willing

POLLING day in the Northern Ireland elections is only two and a half weeks away. All-party talks are due in less than a month. The imminence of these events is beginning to drive a new phase in the region's politics. Yesterday Sir Patrick Mayhew spoke of a gathering momentum towards meaningful negotiations, and thereby elicited an interested response from the Sinn Fein chairman. In the Irish Republic and elsewhere there is now an optimistic belief that June 10 will see all parties around the table and the beginning of substantive and long-awaited talks.

British Labour Party) for parallel talks about weapons. But this is not true. The British government has not signed up and nor have the Unionists, let alone Sinn Fein. Moreover, both London and the Unionists (and indeed Dublin) also require Sinn Fein to commit itself to the Mitchell Report before talks can get under way, as David Trimble re-emphasised yesterday evening.

The reality is that, however much one may wish it otherwise, Sinn Fein has shown very little commitment to a deal of this kind. Martin McGuinness's remarks on Sunday that the IRA was open to persuasion about a new ceasefire seemed at first sight to be encouraging. But yesterday Gerry Adams, who is not always seen as a republican hawk, cautioned against such an interpretation. Further reports added that the IRA would in any case regard any ceasefire as purely tactical. A realist has to suspect that Sinn Fein cannot and will not agree to any of the conditions. Perhaps there will be a ceasefire, but it is unlikely to be on terms so convenient to constitutional Irish nationalists. Perhaps Sinn Fein will turn up for the talks, but it seems improbable that they would then agree either to discuss decommissioning or to commit themselves to Mitchell. June 10 could be a beacon of opportunity, but we should not be blinded by its light into believing that the situation will be transformed if all sides continue to follow their existing inflexible strategies.

The optimists believe that in the end Sinn Fein cannot afford to stay out of the talks. They argue that between now and polling day, the IRA will come up with a renewal of the ceasefire which broke down at Canary Wharf. Reports in the weekend press that the IRA are moving towards a ceasefire — though perhaps only after a final attack — seem to confirm this interpretation. The tightening of pressures on Sinn Fein from America fits a further piece into this upbeat scenario.

Everything in the optimistic version of events, however, depends upon a restoration of the ceasefire. Yet there is no ceasefire and no guarantee that such a move would actually smooth all other problems out of the way. It is a necessary rather than a sufficient condition. The Irish government acts as though the question of weapons decommissioning has been solved by its proposal (which has the backing of the

The ultimate great train journey

Keeping to the line gets you all the way from Istanbul to Saigon

A MISSING LINK between Europe and Asia was filled in yesterday when a new 185 mile stretch of railway joined Mashhad with Tejen. No one need feel embarrassed about consulting the map: even rough guides do not reach the Iran-Turkmenistan border. Yet this is an important connection which will develop new economic ties with the Central Asian Republics along the old Silk Road. The first train, sent on its way by the countries' two presidents, bore the name of "Pride". It will also cause excitement among those who dream of the ultimate great train journey.

the Soviet Far East. But the real traveller will turn sharp right at Alma Ata, taking a mere 800 miles' journey down to Urumqi in Chinese Xinjiang. This is another missing link, planned in the honeymoon years of Sino-Soviet friendship, abandoned during the Split and only completed a few years ago. Even now travel experts warn that "soillets are locked for six hours and Kazakh visas can be uncertain." No real rail fanatic will be deterred by that.

The exhausted may then settle down for two days on the express to Beijing. But another right turn offers a more challenging destination — Vietnam. There is a minor problem on the Yunnan border, still only crossed by cyclo. Otherwise it is straight on down to Saigon, completing a 6,250 miles journey from Europe.

It may seem a bit of an effort, but in an uncertain world it is satisfying to keep to the line.



Letters to the Editor

A telling-off for Ofsted

DOES Jonathan Lawson of Ofsted (Letters, May 10) really expect us to believe that the passages cut from the final Ofsted report on reading just coincidentally show the exceptional problems faced by inner-city schools, but "added little of value" to the document? "Little of value" to the Government's propaganda machine?

CHRIS Woodhead affirms that he has authority to say what, in his view, is amiss, while having no responsibility to rectify the situation (Ofsted chief realises taking on political role, May 11).

with raising standards in education and everything to do with diverting attention away from the Government's appalling record and on to the supposed failings of teachers. L A Summers, 22 Ribston Gardens, Padstock Wood, Kent TN21 6BA.

It is not so easy for Gillian Shephard to blame the schools for their pupils' family poverty or non-English-speaking backgrounds, to quote two of the deleted comments.

Compare this with the position of the teachers on whose work he sits in judgment. They have, under the Tories, seen their authority and influence diminished while being held increasingly responsible for the shortcomings of a profession in thrall to bureaucracy and governmental dictate.

THE Ofsted report has brought predictable condemnation of trendy teaching methods, poor leadership, inadequate teacher training and poor support from (Labour) LEAs.

Is the Office for Standards in Education, from which Lawson writes, connected with the Government by any chance?

Mr Woodhead would be well advised to reflect on the extent he has been instrumental in this before he loses all credibility among teachers.

THE Ofsted report has brought predictable condemnation of trendy teaching methods, poor leadership, inadequate teacher training and poor support from (Labour) LEAs.

John Rothenberg, 39 The Drive, Leeds LS9 1JQ.

David Ainley, 41 The Hill, Cromford, Matlock, Derbyshire DE4 3RF.

Obviously still too high, but surely a remarkable improvement and one warranting some commendation to all the teachers concerned. (Dr) Francesca Garforth, Arlwood, Westerdale, Whitby, N Yorks YO21 2DT.

CHRIS WOODHEAD has lost all credibility as Chief Inspector if he is being forced to delete passages from his reports on schools. He should be noble enough to resign and let the Secretary of State do her own dirty work. M W Owens, 18 Alenby Grove, Westhoughton, Bolton BL5 2AQ.

CHRIS Woodhead's politically motivated actions thoroughly discredit both him and the organisation of which he is the head. He is the puppet of a government with no intention of providing the means by which educational standards can be improved. Ofsted has nothing to do

These sisters are doing it for themselves. What about others?

BEING a younger woman myself, I would like to inform Natasha Walter (Women want power and want it now, May 9) that Margaret Thatcher does not inspire me, in the slightest, and the same goes for those at women's leadership conferences. It is people like Margaret Thatcher, Teresa Gorman and the bosses of both genders who are responsible for the continuing unequal position of women: they cut wages, cut jobs, attack single parents and attack benefits.

sexual essentialism that has so far been a constant in feminist writing. Joan Ebbrell, The Old Vicarage, Yoxford, Suffolk IP17 3EP.

The sort of power women need is the power to unite with men to change society and put an end to the oppression of women.

WITH feminists like Natasha Walter and Catherine the Great, who needs un-reconstructed men? The status quo is maintained, no awkward questions are asked — even if "glittering earnings", "swinging steps" and occasional "smiles" are replacing ties and stuffed shirts. "The job" still gets done (building health markets, selling arms, appropriating pensions, expelling immigrants) without the questions "how are you? how's your son?" etc interfering at all. Christine Bousfield, Lecturer in Literature, Leeds Metropolitan University, Leeds LS1 3HE.

Verity Watts, University of Sheffield, Western Bank, Sheffield S10 2TN.

IT IS a very hollow argument to suggest that we women have as much right to power as men do. What right do any of us have to power? There is a difference between autocratic power which mindlessly controls millions of people purely for personal greed and self-aggrandisement, and power which builds on the strengths, capabilities and potential of others.

Above all, Natasha Walter's piece undermines the sheer unfitness of attributing to genetic endowment attitudes that are essentially socially mediated. Woman, the Network Builder is as much a gendered social construct as Man the Hunter. We can choose whether to foster cooperation or competition in our young but perhaps Walter and the women's leadership forum have finally demonstrated the irrelevance of the

No man, or woman, is worthy of power if they trample other people to get it. Vida Pearson, 23 Main Street, Hoby, Leics LE14 3DT.

Please include a full postal address and a telephone number. We may edit letters: shorter ones are preferred.

For the record

THE Loner's piece (Review, May 10) about Jeanette Winterson moving with her new novel to Grants Books was full of inaccuracies. Most are too trivial to deserve a response, but one is not.

LOOK, A GUARDIAN SUPPORTER!



No one at Random House even saw the novel, let alone bid for it. We were not surprised that Jeanette Winterson chose to follow her editor Frances Coady to Grants, but were very disappointed.

United fans tackle Guardian

Jeanette Winterson has been a very important author for Cape and she continues to be so for Vintage, who published her books in paperback. Indeed Vintage have very recently acquired the rights to The Passion, which they will publish in October.

RICHARD Williams writes with the sour ennu of a Roman emperor whose gourmet sensibilities have been offended because the lions at the Christians a bit too quickly. To suggest that Manchester United have any extra responsibility to entertain the watching millions ignores the often acrimonious relationship between the two clubs.

In short, we remain wholeheartedly committed to Jeanette Winterson and her work. Dan Franklin, Publishing Director, Jonathan Cape, 20 Vauxhall Bridge Road, London SW1V 2SA.

Obviously, no Guardian correspondent expected United to do well this season. Quality football journalism requires much greater detachment than your correspondents seem to possess. Phil Lee, Southport PR8.

RAJ PERSAUD has got it wrong again (Letters, May 11). He talks of "therapists with no qualifications in psychology and psychiatry (and hence who work only in private practice)" compared to "those who work in the NHS".

Hundreds of counsellors have worked in the National Health Service for years, and a third of general practices now employ a counsellor.

PLEASE keep your prejudices in check. Eve Arnold should no more be described as "one of the world's greatest women photographers" (May 9) than Henri Cartier-Bresson, for example, should be described as one of the world's greatest male photographers.

For this to work, the focus of debate must shift to cost-effective ways of providing services which older people want. There must be investment into forward-looking, preventative solutions which look at alternative and complementary services to residential and domiciliary care. This is essential to prevent large numbers of older people having to move into residential care against their wishes because there are no cost-effective alternatives.

Perhaps it is some small measure of progress that the article did not appear on the Women's page. Sarah Vicary, 3 Davis Lodge, Haverstock Street, London N1 8DN.

John Belcher, Chief Executive, Anchor, Fountain Court, Oxford Spire Business Park, Kidlington OX5 1NZ.

A new approach to old-age care

YOUR article on the cost of older people living at home (Home care for the elderly 'dears', May 9) focuses on the "pros and cons" of residential and domiciliary care purely in terms of cost, and not in relation to the wishes of older people themselves. Research repeatedly states older people's desire to remain in their home as long as possible.

THE sight of maimed ex-servicemen of the second world war begging in the streets, and lining up for the dole whilst many of their children went hungry to school, persuaded my generation to do better. All parties agreed to create a nation which cared for all its people from cradle to grave. So we paid into a National Insurance scheme and the better off amongst us were glad to top it up by a fair tax system.

That's it, we thought. We've done our bit. But now we seem to be a burden. If we need care in our old age then we must make new provision for it, the Government is now telling us. A generation which might not have been so prosperous or even here at all if Hitler had won the war makes us almost feel guilty for surviving it. (Rev) Gilbert J Tate, 23 Bramstead Avenue, Oxford Spire Business Park, Kidlington OX5 1NZ.

We shared the bullets and bombs of war and would share the prosperity of peace. We've done our bit. But now we seem to be a burden. If we need care in our old age then we must make new provision for it, the Government is now telling us. A generation which might not have been so prosperous or even here at all if Hitler had won the war makes us almost feel guilty for surviving it. (Rev) Gilbert J Tate, 23 Bramstead Avenue, Oxford Spire Business Park, Kidlington OX5 1NZ.

A fine way to avoid imprisonment

MICHAEL Howard tries to defend record levels of imprisonment by citing the "need to protect society". Yet in 1994 over 22,000 people were imprisoned for non-payment of fines, representing 27 per cent of prison receptions.

IN almost every case, fines could be deducted from income, thus avoiding default and imprisonment. With state benefits, the mechanism is the Attachment of Benefits Order. Why are these procedures not used? Because magistrates' courts are subject to budgetary incentives encouraging fines to be dealt with as quickly as possible. They impose fines which are often too high, with unrealistic repayment levels. A defaulter serves a term in prison, which wipes the fine off the books for the magistrates' court — and it receives its bonus points. JP Penney, Gordon & Penney, Solicitors, 48 Boulevard, Weston-super-Mare BS23 1NF.

In a survey last summer of prisoners in Holloway for unpaid tax or fines, 24 of the 29 who replied were on income support, and 13 had mental or physical health problems. Twenty-four had not even been legally represented at their hearing, making it less likely that the case for remitting the fine or collecting it by other means was put. Andy Brodie, 20 Cooper Avenue South, Liverpool L19 3FN.

A Country Diary

CHESHIRE: The northerly airflow which has been with us for a week or more now has kept many night-time temperatures down below 5 deg C and sometimes even lower, resulting in the occasional ground frost. This has done nothing to improve what has been another disappointing spring for moths at the garden light trap. The appearance of usually plentiful species such as Common Quaker, Early Grey and Hebridean has been very poor and, for the second year in succession, both Fale Brindled Beauty and Twispot Quaker have been absent. Day-time temperatures had a similar effect on the appearance of the spring butterflies where I have struggled to find more than one or two of the familiar Small Tortoiseshell, Peacock and Comma, and I have yet to see my first Brimstone of the year. However, there were encouraging signs over the recent bank holiday weekend when two of the May species were on the wing — Orange

Tip and Speckled Wood. Given favourable weather, the Orange Tip could be with us until the end of June, although in many cases its offspring will be at the mercy of the local council's mowing programme — this species can be badly affected in its early stages by excessive trimming of roadside verges especially where its principal food plants, Ladies Smock and Garlic Mustard, grow. The Speckled Wood, which prefers woodland rides and edges where there is some shade and dappled sunlight, has a more complex life cycle which can involve overlapping broods and in good years it may be seen from April, through the summer, into October. The cool, dry spell has also delayed nesting by the House Martins. On a recent visit to the long mere at a nearby country park, a colleague and I estimated that around 500 hirundines were hawking over the mere, accompanied by a lone Arctic Tern. J M THOMPSON

100 1520

Diary
Matthew Norman

HOW is it, we must ask ourselves today, that Dame Jill Knight never achieved high office? For not only is she a loyalist on all matters except eyes (her late husband was an optometrist), the Tory MP for Edgobaston also has the priceless capacity to crystallise the most complex moral and ethical issues in an instant. Take the length of time human embryos should be stored, which the standing committee discussed last week. Having let the others waffle on a while, Dame Jill unleashed her technical supremacy. "As someone who runs a home, I must tell the committee that it is extremely dangerous to have anything in the deep-freeze for as long as the regulations propose," she said, preparing to deliver the coup de grâce. "To try to make a pie out of pastry that has been left in a deep-freeze for longer than six months is an extremely brilliant job." Absolutely brilliant (embryos are stored at minus 196 centigrade, by the way, in liquid nitrogen). It may even be the most significant back-bench intervention since 1982, when Harry Greenwood demanded a legal definition of "the horse".

WITH the departure of the publicity-shy Christina Odono, the Catholic Herald requires a new editor, and the word is that the rational Paul Johnson is in the frame. Alas, we found him in one of his more choleric moods yesterday, although he very pointedly refused to deny it. "I've nothing to say," he intoned when asked if he wanted the job. "No, I'm not doing anything." And then he hung up. If Paul does get the Herald editorship, let us pray that he quickly remembers Our Lord's teachings about the meek.

JOE Castle writes from Manchester asking if the Dolly Draper "who was the Labour students' guru" in Manchester in 1988 is the Mandy Mandelstam errand boy of today. Mr Castle remembers a profane bully whom he once witnessed telling a student-union executive that "he would one day become leader of the Labour Party". Ridiculous conceit and foul-mouthed boorishness... No, Mr Castle, it can't possibly be the same Dolly Draper after all.

STILL on the subject of namesakes, meanwhile, a Dr David Owen (not that one) has written from west London, enclosing a page from a TV guide he found recently in a Taipei hotel bedroom. Nestling between Road To Mandalay and Ramble Film movie called "Robin Cook's Formula For Death". What with my Mandarin being so rusty, I can make out only a few words from the blurb: "campaign bus", "over the cliff", "whole bloody lot of them", and "only me left". What can it all mean?

MEANWHILE, Robin's best friend Gordon Brown has been taking tuition in the laws of supply and demand from a vending machine. He was seen attempting to buy coffee. Having failed with his first effort (he tried to get the coffee before inserting the money), he came much closer with his second — buying the 23p beverage with 20p — but still fell short. At this point, his bête became too much for him, and he adopted the approach pioneered by Mr Basil Fawcett with his car (albeit without the tree branch). Only then did a passer-by point out that 23p was required, and it was not long before a pacified Gordon wandered off with his steaming polystyrene cup. Sometimes, a practical lesson in market economics can be worth 1,000 hours of theorising, don't you think?

IN Automotive Magazine is a sponsored supplement in which a company calls for its rivals to respect the environment. "We want to hit you in the headline, and in the moving appeal beneath it is some excellent counsel: "Market the fact that you are environmentally friendly," it says, "and that you are making a real contribution towards environmental concerns." Wise counsel indeed, and who better qualified to give it than Shell UK?



Beware Cassandras on the path to reform

Commentary
Hugo Young

AT the weekend, John Major gave a speech to win an election. It had nothing new to say, and is unlikely to serve its purpose. For these good reasons, it was hardly reported at all. It was, nonetheless, significant. What the Prime Minister chose to pitch to Scottish Conservatives was a harbinger of what he will be saying to the country in eleven months' time. It showed us the outline of his simple case: don't let Labour ruin all that we have done. It also showed what Labour has most to be afraid of.

At the heart of it was a message Mr Major viscerally believes in. Not only Major but every Tory whose name will be in the lists. They may fight about Europe and squabble over tax and tone, but the perception of the British constitution is an idea on which every Conservative agrees. There are occasional dissenters in

Scotland, who may still be mildly gripped by devolutionist tendencies they once preached with zeal. But they've swallowed their preferences. All now show a triumphantly concordant hostility to what Mr Major called on Saturday, in a phrase we'll hear more of, Labour's "whole raft of constitutional doodling".

When he talks about this as a kind of insanity, he means it. On the constitution, he's a passionate Tory preserver of all that is. The party is not only conservative, but is aware that if the conservative case is lost now it will never, on this subject, be recovered. Constitutional change, it thinks, is irreversible. Even Michael Forsyth, a Unionist of unholly ferocity, says there's no question of abolishing a Scottish parliament once it has been created. Other ministers, equally horrified by a Bill of Rights or Lords reform or freedom of information, say the same. Labour's past financial disasters have always been made good, they monotonously reflect, but constitutional change can never be undone.

Against the Tories' belief that they will be fighting for everything the British hold dear, Labour offers a message hardly anyone understands. Such obscurity may not pre-

vent Labour from winning the election. But it adds to the risk, and is in any case an extraordinary thing to have to say about the party of reform. What's becoming clear is that the Labour Party is mistaking the nature of its problem.

The devil, they say, is in the detail. And the demonic ascendancy is at numerous points apparent. The more they look at the details of Scottish devolution, the more Labour leaders are compelled to admit there is no answer in logic or symmetry to the most conspicuous problem bedeviling it, the so-called West Lothian question, otherwise describable as the inequality of powers that will be available to Scottish and English MPs in respect of the governing of each other's territory. Likewise, the financial settlement that advantages Scotland over England, while acceptable in present circumstances, cannot survive the creation of a tax-raising Scots parliament, yet is brushed aside as if it didn't exist.

These are just two of myriad details that Scots may have worked out to their satisfaction, but which have yet to pass the test of English scrutiny. I could add hundreds more arising out of each of the five limbs of the Labour constitutional pack-

age, some of which are helpfully rehearsed in the first two reports of the independent Constitution Unit, the only body of work that pretends to prepare Labour for any kind of coherence in these matters when it gets to power.

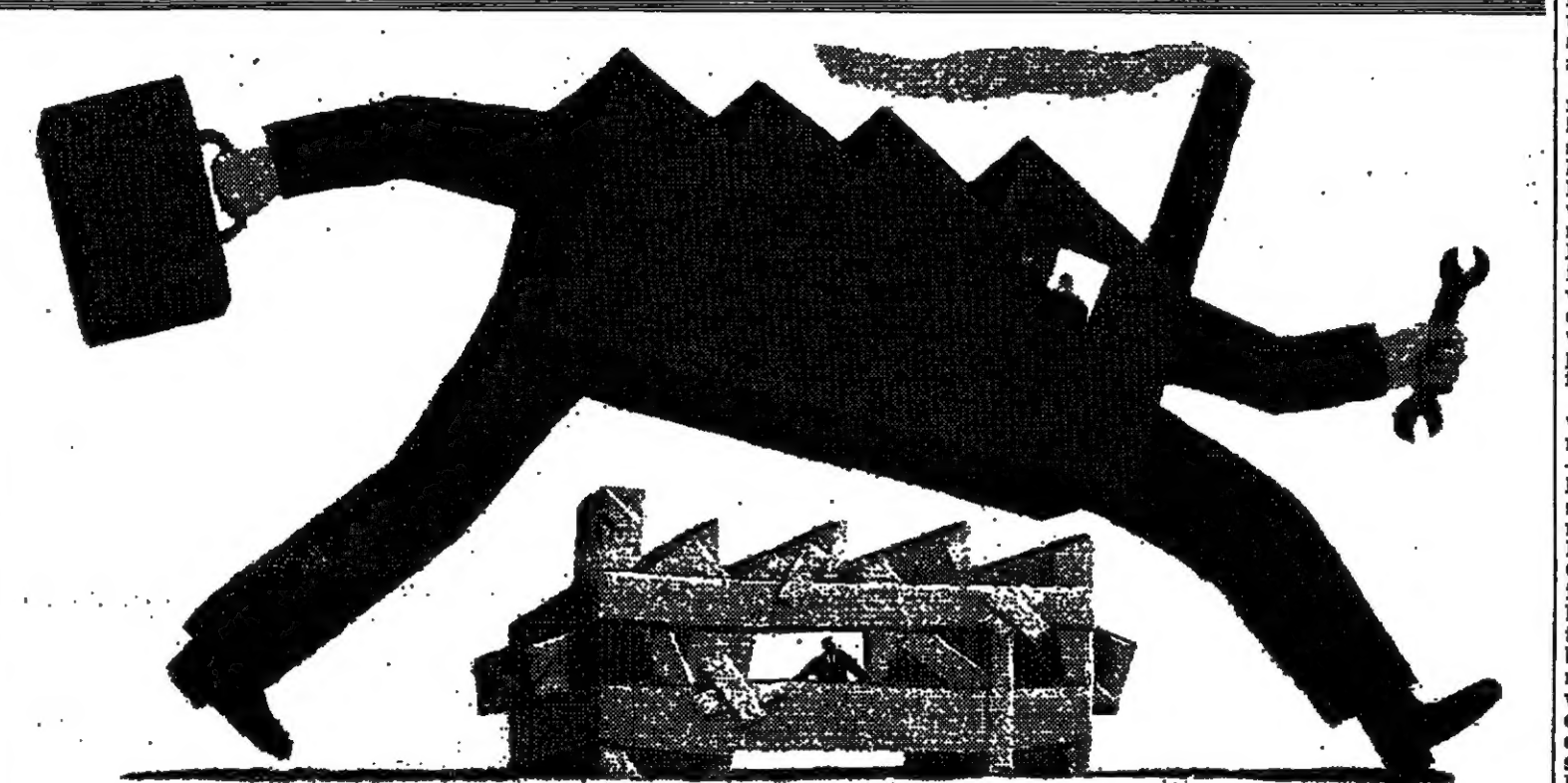
The devil, however, isn't the main issue. The very existence of these details, inherently unresolvable except by political fiat, points to the prior need for a deus ex machina: a controlling scheme for reform, sprung with conviction on the world, which transcends petty disputes and legitimises what has to be done. Labour has hardly begun to produce this. We know the list of ideas. We know that some of them are firm promises. We have no reason to know whether national assent to them stretches anywhere beyond the vague, if settled, feeling that the Tories are a rotten lot and that among their other crimes is the corruption of the political system.

THAT'S about the size of Labour's "constitutional" appeal, and it is inadequate. The only place that's different is Scotland. In Scotland there has been a long enough debate, carried on with due seriousness, to give weight to the majority that favours devolution. In England, that hasn't happened, whether about devolution or Lords reform or the Bill of Rights. The practical problems engage only the tiniest fraction of voters. Even the big ideas behind them has only the most fragile of constituencies.

To push through the hard bargains it entails, they need to show they have a mandate, not least against the obstructions of the Lords. For the Tories to be shamed into acquiescing in the popular will rather than depriving the many procedural impediments against it, that will must be manifest.

At present, Labour is taking it for granted. Where is the voice that will transform constitutional change from a rattled-off shopping list into a millennial project to change for the better every citizen's experience of government? Who has the conviction to move this project from the sidelines to the centre of what Labour has to offer? Mr Blair has made a speech or two. His defence is that nobody listens to speeches, and all of wisdom must be concentrated into the two-sentence sound-bite. Closer to the truth, I think, is that the Labour leadership itself regards these reforms, ultimately, as having a lower priority than the replacement of a Thatcherite by a Labourite ascendancy.

They also say that people are not interested. Who will inquire, for the sake of a second chamber most voters neither know nor care about? Self-condemnation could not be more eloquent. If the reformer can't inspire belief, he has no business starting out on a course which will in the best of times be perilous, in the worst a failure. He needs to arm himself with every weapon against the Cassandras, of whom the Tory party is beginning to mobilise a united army. It will be a national disaster, not just a government calamity. If on constitutional reform the only people with a populist message turn out to be its blazing enemies.



Is sacking workers to increase efficiency and profits a good thing? Yes, argues Alex Brummer, particularly as it leads to the creation of jobs in different areas

Life after downsizing

BRITISH GAS has clearly learnt little from the drobbing of its shareholders. The chief executive officer, Eric Brown, at a time when it was busy eliminating 23,000 jobs. The company's deputy chairman, Philip Rogers, is at it again. No wonder had the gas regulator Claire Spottiswoode announced a new price regime for the gas pipeline offshoot Transco than he was threatening another 10,000 jobs. In the changing global economy of the last decade, the immediate refuge of any corporation failing to deliver to shareholders has been to "downsize". It has become the mantra which many Wall Street experts argue has driven the extraordinary bull markets of the decade. The trend has been spreading relentlessly. It is not just perceived industrial dinosaurs such as British Gas, and IBM and BT in the technology area, which have caught the bug. NatWest Bank announces it will cut 15,000 jobs by the end of the century, and two insurers, Sun Alliance and Royal, say that the price of their 26 billion merger will be 5,000 jobs.

Many of the same factors (such as job insecurity) which have fallen in disrepute, feel-good factor in the UK to save John Major's political hide have been troubling the American people too. In February and March this year the New York Times published a seven-part series, "The Downsizing Of America", which filled 25 densely typed broadsheet pages and totalled 45,000 words. It was the longest series to be published in the paper since the Pentagon Papers contributed to the fall of Richard Nixon in 1971. With the help of some creative statistical work (which has been challenged by some economists) it suggested that since the early 1970s — when Detroit began downsizing its cars and businesses in response to Middle-East oil embargoes — some 43 million jobs have been lost in the US through downsizing. The figure may have been spurious, but it was far too large for a politician as astute as Bill Clinton, who rode into office on the economic-insecurity ticket, to ignore. While the Republicans fought it out on the hustings, Clinton ordered the White House group which coordinates economic policy to undertake a formal study of downsizing, the first ever at-

tempted by a western government. The President took to the road with a new speech, first heard in Cincinnati, preaching the virtues of "corporate citizenship", the idea that companies have responsibility to many classes of stakeholders including employees, not just Wall Street and the shareholders. The President was urged on by his Secretary of Labour, Robert Reich, who argued that it might be time to reward companies which avoid layoffs, and reshuffle their workforces, with tax incentives. The Clinton study, headed by the chairman of the President's Council of Economic Advisers, Dr Joseph Stiglitz, is being eagerly awaited in the US and could become a key text in Clinton's campaign. Ahead of its publication some downsizing gurus are already re-positioning themselves. Stephen Roach of Morgan Stanley, one of the great driving forces behind the concept of downsizing as an investing tool, is among those doing some re-thinking. In some much-quoted comments Roach has now asserted: "If you compete by building, you have a future. If you compete by cutting, you don't."

Even some corporate chiefs now appear to recognise that there are points to be won by joining the anti-downsizing forces. The chairman of the Union Bank of Switzerland, Robert Struder, using words which have become familiar in UK privatised companies, argues that firms which concentrate solely on the short-term interests of shareholders and employees, who have been downsized have taken wage cuts — on average 14 per cent in the period 1981-93 — this is a far smaller pay reduction than some of the figures (which range up to 40 per cent) in the public arena. In fact, the Clinton study is said to show that 88 per cent of all the new jobs created over the past two years in the US have been in industries that pay above-average wages. High-tech, engineering and finance, with white-collar jobs (those which have been most affected by modern corporate downsizing) experiencing net growth. In other words, the paper-pushing clerks' jobs being eliminated by companies such as NatWest in the UK could, in a flexible labour market, reappear quite rapidly as data-processing work at one of the 50 or so centres now doing the work previously done in the bank's back offices.

The Stiglitz study is provoking a ferocious debate. Robert Reich, the US Labour Secretary, is urging that economic insecurity be aggressively tackled. But the US Treasury Secretary, Robert Rubin, suggests that the existing mechanisms are fine. He is, of course, right. The US jobless rate, now hovering at 5.6 per cent of the workforce, is the envy of most of G7. Downsizing has affected almost all the corporations in the upper echelons of the Dow Jones index, which have become more efficient and profitable, delivering not just job losses but new opportunities. One may wince at the thought of another 10,000 jobs going at British Gas. But in flexible labour markets, such transformations of the industrial landscape can now be absorbed.

David Rowan translates the language of the boot

GENERAL Motors went through a volume-related production schedule adjustment. Canadian corporations tell their no-longer-needed employees that they are about to be de-jobbed. And British Gas may soon begin a further round of downsizing, right-sizing or re-engineering anything but telling people that they are being fired. Euphemism is the fastest-expanding sector of the industrial economy today. When corporations slash their workforce, they do not fall to invest in creative linguistics. Nowhere now

are employees simply fired, laid off or made redundant: today they are rationalised out of a company, out-placed from it, involuntarily severed from it, or simply surplus. They may be de-hired, de-cruited or released, and all because their company is restructuring, realigning its workforce or core-competitiveness. They may be told that their jobs are "not going forward", or that they are simply being unassigned; the objective, you see, is to inflict the burden of rejection and humiliation that a firing necessar-

ily involves, in a language that sounds detached, neutral, even constructive. When the Chrysler corporation downsized in Wisconsin, it announced a career alternative enhancement programme — meaning that 5,000 staff were selected out. But hey, why let the Americans dominate in this expanding field? British companies in recent years have been just as eager to non-renew, to delevel, or to undergo a skill-mix adjustment. Those British Gas engineers had better get wise to re-engineering.

How to spend £26m and win the election



Julian Critchley

THE Daily Express reports "exclusively" that the Conservative Party, of which it is so fond, has £26 million to spend between now and the next election. The news has come as something of a surprise to Conservative MPs, who have been told for years that the party was broke. Was there not a second mortgage taken out on 32 Smith Square, were not tweedy, pipe-smoking agents despoiling redundant and stout parties of both sexes instructed by the whips to tighten their belts? If the rumour is true, then what on earth should we spend it all on?

I can only suggest a new soap box for John Major, a taping of the Deputy Prime Minister's hair (there are signs of silver threads among the gold), and a decent suit for the Chancellor, who has been making do with his younger brother's wardrobe for as long as I can remember. And the gift of a pair of hand-made shoes. How else will he be able to cut taxes?

Generous redundancy payments might be made to Michael Forsyth in compensation for loss of office. Michael (El Sid) Portillo, Peter Lilley and John Redwood will be set up in a menage à trois on the Brecon Beacons, and William Hague, in compensation, be given a wig just like Michael Faber's. In this way the party would present a new look, the past 17 years nothing but a fragrant memory.

The news of the party's windfall has coincided with a report — so far unconfirmed — that David Evans, the Luton chicken, is to be responsible for raising still more money for the Tory party. Evans, who told the European Commission to "get stuffed" in the Commons last week, has all the finesse necessary to raise money from business, big and small. As the chairman of Luton Football Club, who has made £32 million out of washing other people's dirty linen, he might well start to put the squeeze on the Moores family, the owners of Littlewoods, the largest private company in the country. The Moores are a little on the tight side, but an appeal made with a stocky little man on his knees with an Arthur Mulard accent could be guaranteed to melt the heart even of Lady Grantchester (who, believe it or not, is richer than the Queen).

ers carrying inspiring slogans such as "It hurt — but wasn't it worth it? Vote Conservative". Lady Thatcher will be sent on a trip round the world, all expenses paid, together with the ageing members of what was once her court: Sir Alfred Sherman, Lord Allister McAlpine and Sir Gordon Reece. Dame Vera Lynn will be asked to become her lady-in-waiting.

The Eurosceptics will have to be bought off. Sir Teddy Taylor will be made a Knight of the Thistle, William Cash, a course on how to make friends and influence people, and Christopher Gill, the Shropshire Meat Pie, on how to avoid catching Creutzfeldt Jacob Disease. The rest of the party's Eurosceptics, who do not amount to very much, will be given Luncheon Vouchers cashable at those of London's Italian restaurants which still employ waiters armed with phallic pepper pots.

Those of the Cabinet who were born in wedlock will be presented by Ian Lang with a Japanese looker, a gesture that will make the point that we have become the enterprise zone of Europe. The Young Conservatives will have their tattoos removed by the NHS, providing they sign a pledge not to drink tartan ale at their party dinners. And John Major will be given an arbutum all of his very own.

As for the donors, no questions will be asked. The Alfayed Brothers will be given OBEs, and invited to John Major's Christmas party at Chequers. Asil Nadir will be invited to return from the rigours of exile in Northern Cyprus and Ernest Saunders will be given back his Guinness.

TRUST that winning the lottery in this way will not go to the head of the leaders of our Great Party. We must be modest in all things. The Johnson Brothers, Frank, Paul and Boris, will be sent into internal exile at Knighton, a dull town on the Luton chicken, to be responsible for raising still more money for the Tory party. Evans, who told the European Commission to "get stuffed" in the Commons last week, has all the finesse necessary to raise money from business, big and small. As the chairman of Luton Football Club, who has made £32 million out of washing other people's dirty linen, he might well start to put the squeeze on the Moores family, the owners of Littlewoods, the largest private company in the country. The Moores are a little on the tight side, but an appeal made with a stocky little man on his knees with an Arthur Mulard accent could be guaranteed to melt the heart even of Lady Grantchester (who, believe it or not, is richer than the Queen).

Think how annoyed Messrs Black and Murdoch would be. It would be like having two Christmases.

I am sure that a small proportion will be spent on post-Sir Julian Critchley is Conservative MP for Aldershot

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Nnamdi Azikiwe

Odyssey of the new Nigeria

DR NNAMDI Azikiwe, who has died aged 91, was the father of independent Nigeria. Three things the political opponents of Zik — as he was always known — did not do was doubt his efficacious charm; dispute his claim as herald of Nigerian nationalism; or argue about his political astuteness.

But in his time he had a mixed press — "six feet of wisdom, six feet of stupidity". He was described as a tribune, agitator, dictator, charlatan and worse; though he was also fondly called saviour, patriot, teacher, lion of Africa, and more.

When in 1937, Azikiwe returned home to found his first newspaper — the West African Pilot — colonial rule was at its height, the district officer inflexible and the European roadmaker was held in awe. Azikiwe said this was a myth; he argued that the African need not be the inferior of any other man, that all that held him in subjugation was ignorance, poverty and disease. His own string of degrees showed that the African too could "learn book". He spread the gospel that the Nigerian had no reason to turn the other cheek. And he gave the British such a drubbing that, overnight, he became "the saviour". It was the beginning of Nigeria's rebirth.

Azikiwe was an orator who could sway the multitude. Give him any crowd for 30 minutes and they all would be eating out of his hand, some of them permanently. Once in 1940 he went to a mass meeting with a text, "the penalty of leadership" and a bundle of leaflets in which were printed gospel songs and spirituals. He spoke with visible emotion and at appropriate intervals led his listeners in *God Moves In A Mysterious Way* and in *John Brown's*

Body. When the lecture was over his listeners poured into the streets, spat on Europeans, beat up Azikiwe's political opponents, and filled the buses and mammy wagons with music.

But Azikiwe was more than a colourful mob-rouser. To him, politics was a science and an art. As a legislator he knew his standing orders inside out, as a parliamentarian he had few rivals. While the Foster-Sutton Commission investigated his conduct in connection with his African Continental Bank, he dealt out secret documents hardly material to the issue, but good enough to convince the people that he was the victim of persecution. When the Commission had found against him, he confidently ordered a general election in the east where he was premier, and secured a vote of confidence.

Azikiwe was born in Zungeru, northern Nigeria, into a world dominated by the British Empire, less than four years after the passing of Queen Victoria. He was the son of the late Obededun Chukwura Azikiwe, a railway technician from Onitsha, and Rachel Oghenyansu. (In 1956 he married an Onitsha chief's daughter.) He received his early education at the Church Missionary Society Central School, Onitsha; the Hope Waddell Training Institute, Calabar; and the Methodist Boys' High School, Lagos, where he first met his Yoruba contemporaries.

When he left school he worked with the treasury as a clerk. Then, in 1924, he attended a lecture by Dr Kwekwi Aggrey and resolved to study in the United States. That year Zik returned to Nigeria to found the West African Pilot and he remained managing director for nearly 30 years. He spent the following decade as a newspaperman — including a spell as Reuter's correspondent — and political pamphleteer.

From 1944, his base was secure as general secretary of the National Council of Nigeria and the Cameroons and after 1946 he remained its president until 1960.

In 1948 he was invited to join the Foot Commission for Nigerianisation of the civil service and became the second Lagos member in the then legislative council of Nigeria. In 1947 he had already led his party's delegation to Britain to ask for a date for self-government. He was told by the then Labour Secretary of State for the Colonies, Mr Cresswell-Jones to "go home and co-operate", but a year later the 1945 Richards Constitution, which he had opposed, was already being reviewed.

In 1952, he was member of the Western House of Assembly, resigning in 1954 to become member of the Eastern House of Assembly and premier of the region. Finally, he chaired the Senate of Federation in 1960 and became Governor-General and Commander-in-Chief of Nigeria 1960-1963, then the first President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria until 1966. When the military forced him out of power and into memoirs and poetry, he retained his university chancellorships for most of the 1960s and 1970s, though two of his books, *Military Revolution in Nigeria* (1972) and *Democracy with Military Vigilance* (1974), reflected the economic turmoil and waning liberal optimism in the new west Africa which he had done so much to shape. The tragic Biafra secession evoked from him a second volume of poems: *Civil War Soliloquies* (1978).

Other follow-ups had different soliloquies about Azikiwe's tergiversation over Biafra: first advising the secessionist General Ojukwu, writing the Biafrans' national anthem, and publishing their cause on the world stage; then



Understanding the art and science of politics... Nnamdi Azikiwe

a year later negotiating peace terms with General Gowon of Nigeria and recommending repudiation of Ojukwu. Even into his eighties Zik remained politically active. In 1983-84 he joined his old rival Chief Obafemi Awolowo of the Unity Party, and Wole Soyinka, Nigeria's political prisoner and future winner of the Nobel prize for literature, to exorcise the gerrymandering and thuggery associated with President Shagari's National Party of Nigeria. It was another about-turn, for he had made an alliance with Shagari four years previously.

Zik's farewell letter to his presidential successor was a classic of his own kind, quot-

ing extensively from the Bible, the Koran, and American poets, and calling upon President Shagari to live up to his oath of office and "not allow his heart to be hardened like Pharaoh who did not budge in his decision to flout all the laws of decency and impose a dictatorship of Israel." But in modern Nigeria, as elsewhere, the spoken and written word of an educated man could no longer win arguments, and he retreated from public life. He leaves several children.

He remained keenly interested in sport, holding offices such as president of the Lagos Football Association, vice-chairman of the Nigerian Boxing Board of Control, president of the Nigerian Amateur Athletic Association, and a member of the Nigerian Olympic Committee. His own recreations were lawn tennis and playing the piano to his family. After his wife Flora died he retreated from public life. He leaves several children.

Christopher Driver

Nnamdi (Benjamin) Azikiwe born November 16, 1904; died April 14, 1996

Billy Byers

Jazz's constant horn

ALTHOUGH he was never in the forefront as a virtuoso soloist, Billy Byers, who has died aged 69, was a widely-respected musician. He had great natural endowments, and was into his professional career by his early teens. He was in constant demand both as a trombonist and as an orchestrator and appeared on dozens of albums led by more famous soloists, including Al Cohn, Kenny Clarke, Ralph Burns and Don Elliott.

"Billy" Byers was born in Los Angeles, and as a 15-year-old was playing with a local ensemble, the Hollywood Carteen Kids. He soon found work with movie studio orchestras, then took a year off to study at Harvard before joining the army in 1944. On demobilisation a year later he returned to Hollywood, this time as composer of screen background music. In 1949 he emerged into the jazz mainstream with the big bands of George Auld and then of Buddy Rich.

After settling in New York he briefly wrote and played for Benny Goodman before moving on to the Charlie Ventura big band. Then he replaced Johnny Mandel as staff composer, orchestrator, trombonist and occasional pianist at the New York radio station WMGM.

In 1956 he left for Paris for recording and touring work, but was back in New York the following year. Later he toured Europe as Quincy Jones's assistant on the *Free and Easy* show. In New York he made one album under his own name, but for the most part he served as a sideman. His last album on which he appeared was *Improvise* with Jimmy Smith. The *Orn* will probably be remembered as it became a cult recording.

Billy Byers was an admirably thorough professional able to cope with more or less any musical contingency. There are a great many worse things to be.

Benny Green

Bill (William Mitchell) Byers, musician, born May 1, 1927; died May 1, 1996

Birthdays

Francesca Annis, actress, 61; Dr Hastings Kamuzu Banda, former president of Malawi, 91; Chay Blyth, yachtsman, 56; Jack Bruce, rock singer, bassist, composer, 53; Alec Dankworth, jazz bassist, 56; Phil Drabble, naturalist and broadcaster, 82; Helen Field, opera singer, 45; Emma Forbes, children's television presenter, 33; Baroness (Sarah) Hogg, economist, former head of the Prime Minister's Policy Unit, 50; Peter Kirsten, cricketer, 41; Geoffrey Lister, chief executive, Bradford and Bingley Building Society, 58; George Lucas, film director and producer, 52; Lord McAlpine, former deputy chairman, Conservative Party, 54; Canon John Oates, rector, St Bride's, Fleet Street, 66; Stan Phillips, actress, 62; Sir Adam Ridley, executive director, Hambro Bank, 54; Leslie Sharp, chief constable, Strathclyde, 60; Patricia Turner, GMB trades unionist, 69; Franjo Tujman, president of Croatia, 74; Adrienne Dziel-Hamilton, circuit judge, 64; Bob Woolmer, cricket coach, 47.

Death Notices

MEMORIAL service on Thursday 13 May (celebrated after long illness) for Mrs Joan Thirkettle, nee Rushdie, who died on Monday 11 May 1996, at her home, 14, St John's Road, W19 5HT. Burial at St John's Church, W19 5HT. Contributions to St John's Church, W19 5HT. Family home, 14, St John's Road, W19 5HT.

For more news visit our website at www.guardian.co.uk

Joan Thirkettle

Newsmaker and news breaker

TO THE seven million regular viewers of News at Ten, Joan Thirkettle, who has died aged 48, was a familiar figure. She was the reporter standing outside the High Court in the wind and the rain reporting on the progress of the Birmingham Six's appeal, covering Richard Branson's ballooning adventures and, from time to time, would come up with the most extraordinary scoop.

In 1990 when Salman Rushdie first learnt the full implications of the Iranian fatwa there was great competition between journalists to obtain the first news interview. Many high profile broadcasters believed they had the inside track. In fact it was Joan Thirkettle who proudly informed her newsdesk that Rushdie would be arriving at the ITN building in the morning to give her the first interview. There were still some sceptics on the reporters' desk when, amidst extraordinary security, Rushdie duly arrived on time and sat down to be interviewed by Joan.

Joan Thirkettle was educated at Hurst Primary School and Bexley High

School — both in Bexleyheath, Kent. From London University she joined Associated Rediffusion, London's first TV station as a trainee researcher. Every week Rediffusion's studios in Kingsway were the focus for a classic piece of 1960s London — the transmission of *Ready, Steady, Go*. Joan got to meet the pop stars and fashion designers of the day and a young record plugger, Richard Branson. Later, as an ITN reporter, she covered his trans-oceanic balloon and speedboat challenges and his business activities.

She went on to work in mainstream journalism on the Daily Mail and then in 1969 as a property and business writer on the Sunday Times. Three years in radio with BBC Radio and British Forces Broadcasting gave her the necessary grounding to become a founding producer of London Broadcasting Company (LBC) in 1973. She produced the station's two hour lunchtime news programme and met colleagues like Jon Snow and Carol Barnes who, with her, moved to Independent Television News.

Throughout her 22 years at ITN she was a general repor-



Scoop... Thirkettle was the first to interview Salman Rushdie after the Iranian fatwa

ter with specialisms, though never a specialist correspondent. She loved reporting the law, and in recent years had taken a particular interest in the Birmingham Six's appeal. She covered many stories about health and the arts. Like the very best of the top

flight reporters, she was able to pick up a story which broke without warning. So on the day in 1994 when news came in that the Labour leader John Smith had been taken to hospital in London after a heart attack, she was the right choice to send to St

Bartholomew's Hospital. From there she reported live into an unscheduled news programme that was to win the Royal Television Society Award.

The common factor in the more than 1,500 news stories she covered for ITN was

single-minded determination. She had a distinctive style of reporting which viewers noticed and remembered. But she was also determined to combine her career with motherhood. She lived with Daisy, 16 and Michael, 15, in Camden Town. By carefully managing her working hours she was able to be a professional journalist, a very caring parent and an active resident in a neighbourhood which included Alan Bennett and Jonathan Miller.

Stewart Purvis

Jon Snow writes: Joan and I were founding operatives of LBC, Britain's first legal commercial radio station. She arrived already a proper journalist and tutored many of us in what we were supposed to do. She and I read alternative news bulletins on 15 hour shifts.

We envied her experience and her unforgettable by-line that travelled so memorably to News at Ten.

In the mid-1970s, as a woman working in the male dominated world of television news, she was very much a rarity. It was no easy ride, constantly asked about her hair, her clothes, her voice, she just worked her way through it.

She broke many of her own stories and was endlessly dependable: she was always there to do the story when others had either refused it or failed to find it — hence her prolific output. It's the greatest tribute to her that she survived and prospered in television news when so many other women found themselves sidelined. And beyond that all, as a single parent she managed to nurture two young children to their teenage years. Our thoughts must be with Daisy and Michael. Many women now working in television news have much to be grateful to her for.

Joan Thirkettle, journalist, born September 14, 1947; died May 11, 1996

Jackdaw



takes time — time they don't have. Rumours are rife that antibiotics have run out. The authorities caution against panic. You know that you and your family have been exposed...

Robert Taylor in *New Scientist* imagines London under attack from terrorists using biological weapons.

medallion man with the aid of a large, leaking, paint-filled sack hung on a chain round his neck. The farmer can then identify, thanks to a large blob of resultant paint on the rump, which of the ladies has been, er, stepping out with, and those he hasn't taken a shine to. Armed with this knowledge, then, and helplessness with laughter, I can hardly be blamed for driving clean off the road when I caught sight of one particularly perplexed ewe running about with a bright red forehead.

Anthony French *Constant on life down on the farm*, for *Sunday Express* readers

Brick work

THROWING food dye at the work that represented the most visible public response. The Bricks were withdrawn. *Andrew Nairne climbing over long time controversy and Talk Gallery star Carl Andre in Friese.*

Sheep shag

I GATHER from a farming friend that in the wonderful world of sheep, the business of procreation is known as tupping. Furthermore, it transpires that, in order to confirm that Mr Frize Ram has indeed had his tuppence worth with sufficient ladies of the flock, he is first transferred into a sort of woolly

Western appearance would enhance their appeal to American servicemen. Large doses of the doctored industrial fluids were injected directly into their breasts. To prevent silicone from migrating into the body, the Japanese added cottonseed or olive oil to cause immediate scarring, a way to contain the silicone at the site of the injection. The practice travelled immediately to Nevada, California, and Texas, where many exotic dancers sought out the procedure. Predictably horror stories abounded. Accidental injection of silicone into the bloodstream could result, albeit infrequently, in blindness and even death. Many women suffered gangrene, pneumonia, massive infection, and collapsed lungs. In some cases, silicone migrated to other parts of the body, accumulating in large lumps. Sometimes, the lumps could be surgically removed. In other cases, however, surgeons found it impossible to excise them without undue disfigurement. Sometimes, surgeons had to perform

mastectomies... Eventually, Nevada enacted emergency legislation making silicone injections a felony and California passed a law making silicone breast injections a misdemeanor.

*Ms catches up with the breast implanters in an extract from John A. Byrne's *Informed Consent: A Story of Personal Tragedy and Corporate Betrayal*.*

Inside the *Silicone Breast Implant Crisis*.

you're smoking, you're acutely present to yourself; you step outside the unconscious forward rush of life. That is why the condemned are allowed a final cigarette. This is why (or so the story goes) gentlemen in evening dress stood puffing at the rail as the Titanic went down.

Jonathan Franzen *lights up in the New Yorker*

Matched words

AMONG the anxieties best suited to containment by cigarettes is, paradoxically, the fear of dying. What serious smoker hasn't felt the surge of panic at the thought of lung cancer and immediately lit up to beat the panic down?... Death is a severing of the connection between self and world, and since the self can't imagine not existing, perhaps what's really scary about the prospect of dying is not the extinguishment of one's consciousness but the extinguishment of the world... Time stops for the duration of a cigarette; when

Last smokes

AMONG the anxieties best suited to containment by cigarettes is, paradoxically, the fear of dying. What serious smoker hasn't felt the surge of panic at the thought of lung cancer and immediately lit up to beat the panic down?... Death is a severing of the connection between self and world, and since the self can't imagine not existing, perhaps what's really scary about the prospect of dying is not the extinguishment of one's consciousness but the extinguishment of the world... Time stops for the duration of a cigarette; when

Cyberspoons

Bored of the 14 million to one chance of winning the lottery but still desperate for the cash? Jackdaw finds another method, courtesy of Fortean Times. Uri Geller last month announced his latest challenge to the world's psychokinetics — bend a spoon over the Internet and win \$1 million. This is believed to be the first attempt to test whether psychic pow-

ers can be made to work over the Infobahn. Geller's new challenge uses a "live" Internet video image of a spoon inside a see-through safe in his Berkshire home. Would be spoon-benders should point their browsers at "Uri Geller's Psychic City" (<http://www.urigeller.com>) and concentrate on trying to bend the spoon; stress games on the spoon will register any movement of more than five degrees. If the spoon bends, anyone who is logged on at the time will be invited to put on a repeat performance in front of Geller himself, and David Berglas, President of the Magic Circle, along with representatives of Broadcastsystem, the event's sponsors, and Cornhill, who have insured the spoon for \$1 million against being bent.

Jackdaw wants your jewels. E-mail jackdaw@guardian.co.uk; fax 0171-713 4366; Jackdaw, The Guardian, 119 Farringdon Road, London EC1R 3ER.

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Finance Guardian

Black day for a million Sids

Get-tough rules cut gas payouts

Nicholas Barnister and Simon Beavis

BRITISH Gas shareholders were last night bracing themselves for huge dividend cuts and the prospect of a pitched fight with its regulator at the MMC over a tough new system of price controls.

Labour also attacked the gas regulator, claiming that yesterday's hard-hitting review had been delayed for a week so as not to frighten off investors from the next week's Rairack flotation. The claim was denied by Ofgas, which said delays were due to complexities and late changes to the two-volume document.

British Gas refused to be drawn on its dividend plans for small shareholders — the 1.7 million so-called Sids — and big investors. But the City was convinced new price controls on the TransCo pipelines business will force British Gas to chop payouts by between 25 and 50 per cent.

The company insisted that the Ofgas proposals, to cut prices by between 20 and 25 per cent next year and peg them at 5 percentage points below inflation for the following four years, represented "a black day for Sid".

But Ofgas director general Clare Spottiswoode said the privatised company was overreacting and pointed out that shareholders had enjoyed a return of 8 per cent in the 10 years since privatisation. That figure is likely to be cut to between 6.5 and 7 per cent a year under her plans.

She warned the company that it could end up with an even tougher deal if it forced her to refer the issue to the Monopolies Commission.

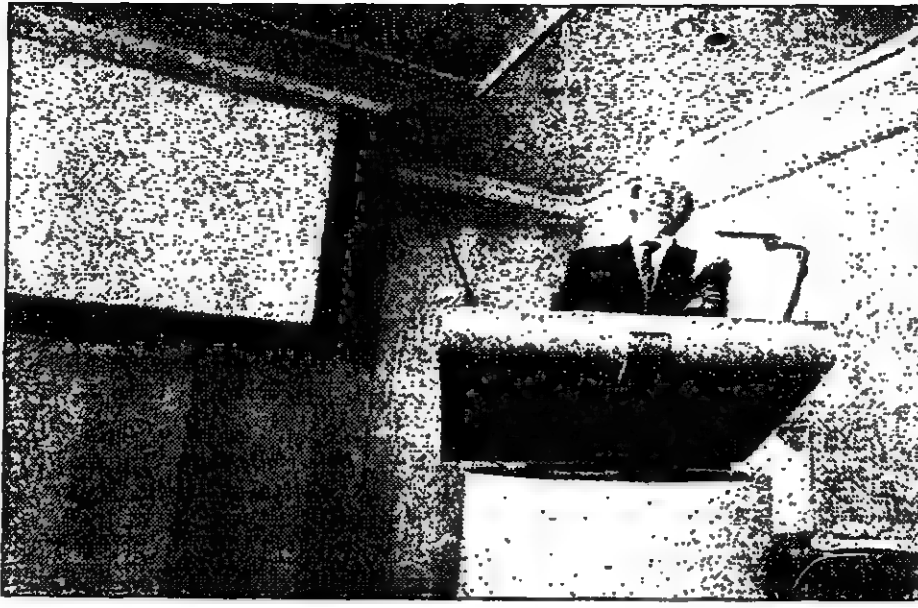
"We have been more generous to shareholders than any of the other utilities' regulators have been," she said. "Although it may appear today that we have been draconian to them, we have in fact been quite generous."

Labour's transport spokesman Brian Wilson called for an inquiry into the delays in producing the Ofgas report. It was a reminder of the effects of regulatory intervention in a privatised utility, and could have influenced potential investors who had to send cheques for shares last week, ahead of next week's float. "This is a message that Ministers didn't want to emerge at the most sensitive moment in the Rairack sell-off," he said.

Some City institutions were concerned about the impact on confidence. "It would be unfortunate if one had a series of these quite dramatic announcements," said one City source. "The long-term investor needs to have some degree of certainty."

While everyone accepted that British Gas was inevitably subject to regulator interference, the problem would be if Ofgas changed the rules "so sharply and so frequently" that shareholders and customers did not know what was going on.

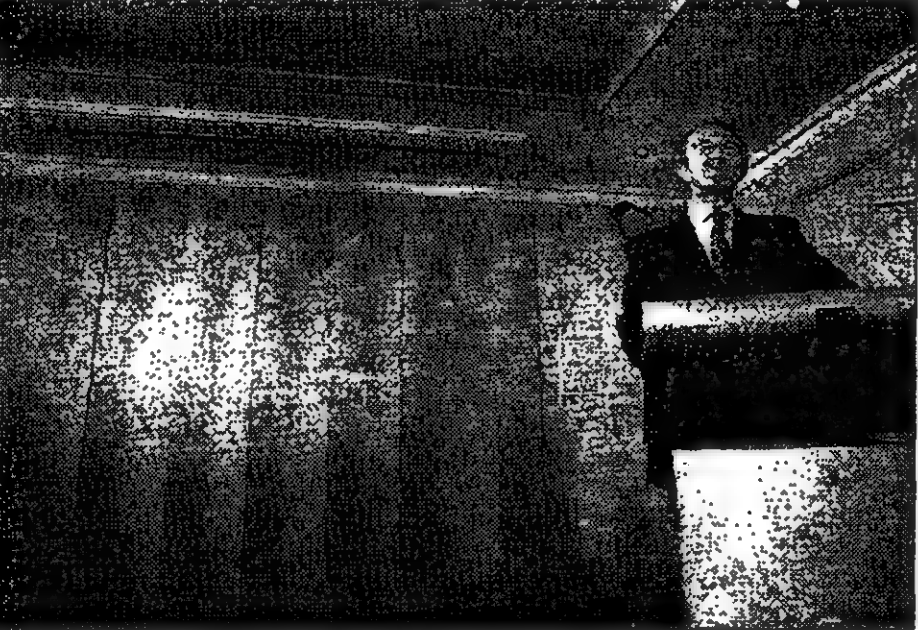
Heavy energy users in industry — who could see their bills cut by up to £60,000 a year — welcomed the proposals. The Energy Intensive User Group, which includes the cement, chemical, and iron and steel industries, said the proposals would redress the balance between customers and shareholders. It added that its members had made "an excessive contribution to British Gas's undeserved profitability".



Going... Someone's hit the wrong switch



Going... The screen begins to wind up



Going... Philip Rogerson looks bemused

Controversy follows the DTI's strong woman at centre of row

Profile

Nicholas Barnister

CLARE Spottiswoode's appointment as director general of Ofgas in 1993 shocked and baffled British Gas. The former middle-ranking civil servant had left the Treasury to raise a family. Her experience of business was limited to starting and selling two small businesses — one importing silks and knick-knacks from Thailand, the other selling computer software.

If British Gas thought it was in for a gentle ride following the bitter squabbling with her predecessor, Sir James McKinnon, it was quickly disabused.

Ms Spottiswoode is a determined advocate of competition and is thought to favour the free market views of Friedrich Hayek, the economist.

To bring about her vision of competition throughout the gas industry, she deliberately decided to work much more closely with the DTI than any of the other utility regulators.

Born in Lancashire in 1953, she attended 11 schools — as her father travelled abroad — before ending up at Cheltenham Ladies' College. She left with an impressive clutch of A levels in maths, applied maths, further maths and physics, and went on to become one of the first female undergraduates at Clare College, Cambridge.

She switched from a maths scholarship to economics, and managed an upper second despite distractions including rowing and theatre.

Two years at Yale were followed by three at the Treasury. After selling her computer business, she taught at the London Business School before bursting on to the public stage as head of Ofgas.

She was soon plunged into controversy — having to apologise for giving inaccurate evidence to a Commons select committee and being forced to deny having had an affair with the DTI official who had recommended her for the DTI job.

Then at the height of the public outcry about the salaries paid to British Gas directors she demanded a whopping salary increase — to £110,000. She claimed she could earn £250,000 in the private sector. In the end, her pay was set at £90,000.

Consumer's ally can injure others



Edited by Alex Brummer

OF ALL Britain's privatised utilities, the one least likely to evoke public sympathy is British Gas. Under the chairmanship of Richard Giordano it trampled roughshod over the rights of its workforce; it crushed a small shareholders' revolt with scant sensitivity to the feelings of the Sids; management has looked after itself greedily and has been sloppy in its handling of colliers.

This public relations debacle has not been assisted by the company's decision, in the face of the Ofgas ruling on TransCo prices, to reach for the ejector button and put further 10,000 jobs on the line.

Despite all of these errors, this time around British Gas does appear to have some right on its side. The least any management can be expected to ask for is a stable regulatory regime which allows it to engage in long-term planning. This has been absent from the regulation of British Gas.

It endured the radical regulation of James McKinnon, who at one point wanted to break the company up into at least 13 separate entities, two Monopolies Commission inquiries; the political interference of Michael Heseltine who speeded up the MMC timetable to the point at which it makes no sense, and now it has Ms Spottiswoode wanting to return to some of the MMC ideas.

The proposals to claw back depreciation on pre-1992 assets and to cut back the asset value of the company from £17 billion to £9.1 billion, appears to be a case of regulation gone mad.

Everyone expected a tough price review for TransCo and that is absolutely right. But the financial engineering which has accompanied this makes no sense. It is more than anything which sent British Gas shares tumbling on the stock market.

The cloud of regulatory uncertainty has darkened again with the prospect of yet another MMC inquiry.

Ms Spottiswoode may have set out to be the consumers' friend but in the process has jeopardised other stakeholders.

bo for Matra's parent Lagardere, to acquire a controlling stake in Thomson CSF — especially if, as Matra was suggesting yesterday, it did so with the backing of BAE, GEC and Dasa.

That, however, might be a lot of ducks to line up in a single row. The snag with trying to assemble a European defence industry capable of meeting the US heavyweights head on is that so many entrenched interests are involved.

National pride, military prejudice and government ownership stand in the way of straight takeover bids.

The defence contractors, aware of commercial imperatives, are beginning to feel their way towards a solution by ways ranging from joint ventures in defined business areas to co-operation on specific projects, but at a pace which can hardly be described as rapid.

Privatisation, declining defence budgets and increasing research and development costs should, over time, however, erode the barriers to the restructuring through acquisition. The risk must be that, by the time that happens, the tangled web of joint ventures, cross shareholdings and the like now being put in place may prove another barrier to a radical solution to the industry's problems of declining orders and increased competition.

Standard skill

POLICYHOLDERS at Standard Life can but admire the skill of the fund managers guarding their interests. A decade-long investment in their neighbour in Edinburgh, the Bank of Scotland, has been turned from £155 million into a stake worth £900 million.

The life company appears to be taking advantage of the buoyancy in financial sector shares, in the form of income merger activity, to diversify itself a top-heavy investment. It will almost certainly seek to place the shares, a sizeable deal, rather than allow the whole 32.3 per cent holding to fall into unfriendly hands.

There is still some lingering interest for Standard in the Bank of Scotland connection, in that its neighbour is a distribution outlet for its tied products. Although it is possible to argue that armed with the £900 million it will receive from the sale of Standard Life will have the kind of war chest necessary to absorb one of its smaller Scottish mutual competitors or move into bancassurance by acquiring a building society or two, distribution even for the aristocrats of the Bank of Scotland, in that its neighbour is a distribution outlet for its tied products. Although it is possible to argue that armed with the £900 million it will receive from the sale of Standard Life will have the kind of war chest necessary to absorb one of its smaller Scottish mutual competitors or move into bancassurance by acquiring a building society or two, distribution even for the aristocrats of the Bank of Scotland, in that its neighbour is a distribution outlet for its tied products.

Commission faces double difficulty from the utilities

The MMC

Nicholas Barnister and Simon Beavis

UTILITY privatisation is in the first time the poisoned chalice is likely to be passed to the Monopolies Commission. The MMC could this summer be asked to sort out two of the most intractable disputes between privatised industries and regulators, British Gas and British Telecom each expected to be in front of the commission within months.

The timing could hardly be worse. The Government has twice in recent years ignored the advice of the commission,

once over an 18-month review of the gas industry and in recent weeks over its advice on vertical integration in the electricity industry.

British Gas and BT are threatening to force MMC investigations if they cannot persuade their regulators to water down price controls.

If the regulators refuse to budge and the companies decide to tough it out, the conflicts have to be referred to the commission.

Commission investigations take months of work and tie up the management of the companies concerned for inordinate amounts of time. To find a solution to the price control issues, the commission will have to examine both companies in great detail.

Outlook

Simon Beavis

NO MATTER how many spin doctors British Gas employs, it always seems to trip up. Yesterday was no exception.

With directors in the throes of one of the fiercest ever public condemnations of a regulator, someone inadvertently leant on a switch, the curtains in the darkened presentation room swung open and the screen summary of their

combative arguments disappeared slowly into the ceiling. Deputy chairman Philip Rogerson could only ask forlornly if it were not a case of game, set and match.

He knows it is not. The battle with Ofgas over price controls looks set to be decided at the Monopolies and Mergers Commission. It would be a brave punter who bet on the company winning.

Privatised 10 years ago, British Gas has seen its cosy monopoly — serving 19 million domestic customers plus industrial and commercial clients — destroyed. The Government merely

took a public sector monopoly and slung it into the private sector, and it took ministers seven years to admit the crassness of their original design. In the three years since the Government decided to plunge for liberalisation, the company has been in a state of flux. Even if BG had been fleet of foot, it would have found such circumstances hard to control. British Gas has been lumbering.

The question is: can it complete the centrepiece of its survival plan, demerger into two businesses?

For the Government, there must be growing doubt that

plans to introduce full competition across the market can be achieved by April 1998.

Yesterday's review appears to strike at the grand plan to create a UK pipelines and international exploration and production business — TransCo International — and a domestic supply company — British Gas Energy (BGE).

For a start, Ofgas has questioned the value of TransCo assets, suggesting £9 billion, not the £17 billion BG claims. Optimistic analysts predict a cut of 25 per cent in TransCo's prices. Most think it will be more.

Part of the demerger logic is to separate profitable TransCo from British Gas's liabilities on long-term "take or pay" contracts, mostly signed when BG enjoyed a monopoly.

Since then competition has taken a chunk out of the industrial and commercial markets, and begun to eat into the domestic market, while gas prices have tumbled. The company has huge amounts of expensive gas it cannot sell. It is asking producers to renegotiate the contracts.

Until they do — or a gas interconnector to the Continent allows some of the surplus to be sold — BGE looks a leaky vessel.



Investors ignore abuses and dive into Indonesia

John Aglionby in Jakarta

BRITISH companies are increasingly turning a blind eye to Indonesia's human rights abuses in order to invest in the country's flourishing, if overheating, economy. Figures announced yesterday reveal that last year, British direct investment approvals in Indonesia were valued at almost

£60 billion. In the first four months of this year, they have exceeded £26.5 billion, a 38.8 per cent increase on the same period last year.

Leading British investors in Indonesia include BP, ICI, and RTZ Mining. The latter has a 40 per cent stake in PT Freeport, the Indonesian branch of the American mining giant Freeport-McMoran. Although PT Freeport received a favourable environmental audit last month, tribes of people living around its huge copper mine in Irian Jaya, continually complain of human rights abuses and environmental degradation.

The soaring British investment is also in spite of other, well-publicised, abuses. Last

month, three unarmed students, demonstrating against a bus fare rise, were killed when soldiers rampaged through their campus in the South Sulawesi town of Ujungpandang. Twelve soldiers are to be court-martialed for "responding excessively".

Also last month, three soldiers were sentenced to only 2½ years in prison for killing four East Javanese villagers in 1994 during a protest against land appropriation.

And local residents, national and international human rights organisations, continue to complain about human rights abuses in the province of East Timor.

"Foreign investors are buying economic growth. Politics comes later. If at all."

Last year, market capitalisation on the Jakarta stock exchange rose by 46 per cent.

Mark Canning, first secretary (commercial) at the British Embassy in Jakarta, agreed. He said: "People now go where they think there are the best opportunities to make money. And there is a huge heightening interest in the opportunities available here."

These were increased earlier this year when the Indonesian government further liberalised foreign investment regulation. In many sectors, foreign investors are now allowed to own 100 per cent of local companies, al-

though in the utilities sector the figure is still 49 per cent.

Mr Canning added: "Once companies realise the opportunities here they are keen to further develop their investment."

Future British investment to Indonesia looks likely in the transportation sector and oil industries, following two trade delegations here in the past six weeks, led by Transport Secretary Sir George Young and Trade Minister Lord Fraser respectively.

Apple links its life to Internet

Mark Tran in New York

APPL Computer yesterday linked its fortunes to those of the Internet as it promised to revolutionise the medium in the way it had the personal computer.

In a heavily prognosticated speech, Apple's new chairman, Gilbert Amelio, said that the company planned to make its platforms — Macintosh, Newton and Pippin — the best of their kind for the Internet.

Newton is described as a personal digital assistant and Pippin is a games device that can browse the Internet via television sets.

By the end of the year, Mr Amelio said, all Macintosh computers would be Internet-ready. Apple has been criticised for its lack of an Internet strategy, unlike its great rival Microsoft. But the Internet does provide an opportunity for Apple as it faces one of its periodic crises. Nevertheless, 35 per cent of

all Internet traffic is via Macs, and Apple technology is widely used by programmers who create Web sites.

To make a point about Apple's compatibility with the Net, Mr Amelio used the Newton to surf the Internet and download files in a demonstration in front of 4,000 developers and journalists.

Mr Amelio plans to streamline the company's product line by stopping making 20 of the 40 models — and using just one operating system instead of the technology work across different platforms.

Mr Amelio stopped short of abandoning the hardware business to concentrate on Apple's software, a strategy advocated by many Mac users.

Apple suffered a \$740 million (£390 million) loss in its last quarter as it took heavy charges.

TOURIST RATES — BANK SELLS

Australia 1.8375	France 7.80	Italy 2.327	Singapore 2.025
Austria 15.85	Germany 2.550	Malta 0.542	South Africa 6.38
Belgium 46.28	Greece 322.00	Netherlands 2.5225	Spain 186.00
Canada 2.03	Hong Kong 11.44	New Zealand 2.14	Sweden 17.90
Cyprus 0.6975	India 53.44	Norway 9.74	Switzerland 1.880
Denmark 8.74	Ireland 0.5400	Portugal 232.75	Turkey 11,1992
Finland 7.19	Israel 4.92	Saudi Arabia 5.06	USA 1.4225

Sourced by NatWest Bank (excluding Asian rupee and Israeli shekel)

ips
ad death
g fast
rgines
over cuts
s go to AM
refused

BAe and Matra create £1bn-a-year business Missiles merger sparks new moves

Mark Milner
European Business Editor

THE future of a key sector in Europe's defence industry appeared to be in a state of flux last night after news of a series of potential alliances in the missile sector.

British Aerospace and France's Matra confirmed that they are to merge their missile operations to create a £1 billion-a-year business. Bae will back a bid by Matra's parent, telecommunications and media group Lagardère, for a controlling stake in the defence electronics manufacturer, Thomson-CSF, when it is privatised by the French government later this year.

But Matra raised the prospect of a much broader restructuring of Europe's missile sector when the chairman of its defence arm, Noël Forgeard, claimed that Germany's Daimler-Benz Aerospace and Britain's GEC — which are both Lagardère shareholders — were interested in joining its bid to take control of Thomson-CSF.

Mr Forgeard added that once the missile deal with Bae had taken effect, he hoped that a similar merger involving Dasa's missile and satellite business would be possible.

Dasa, which already has two joint ventures with Thomson-CSF in defence and is negotiating the merger of its own missile business with that of another French company, Aerospatiale, responded coolly. A spokesman for the German company said last night: "We are looking with interest at the restructuring with interest in the French government."

"Everyone wants to be on the starting grid because everyone wants to be on the finishing line, too. There is going to be a lot of movement between now and where we end up," said one source.

The announcement of the BAe/Matra missile deal was greeted with relief in the City yesterday. "This has been going on for so long — about three years — that people were wondering if it would ever happen. The fact that it has is a great relief," said SGST analyst Zafar Khan.

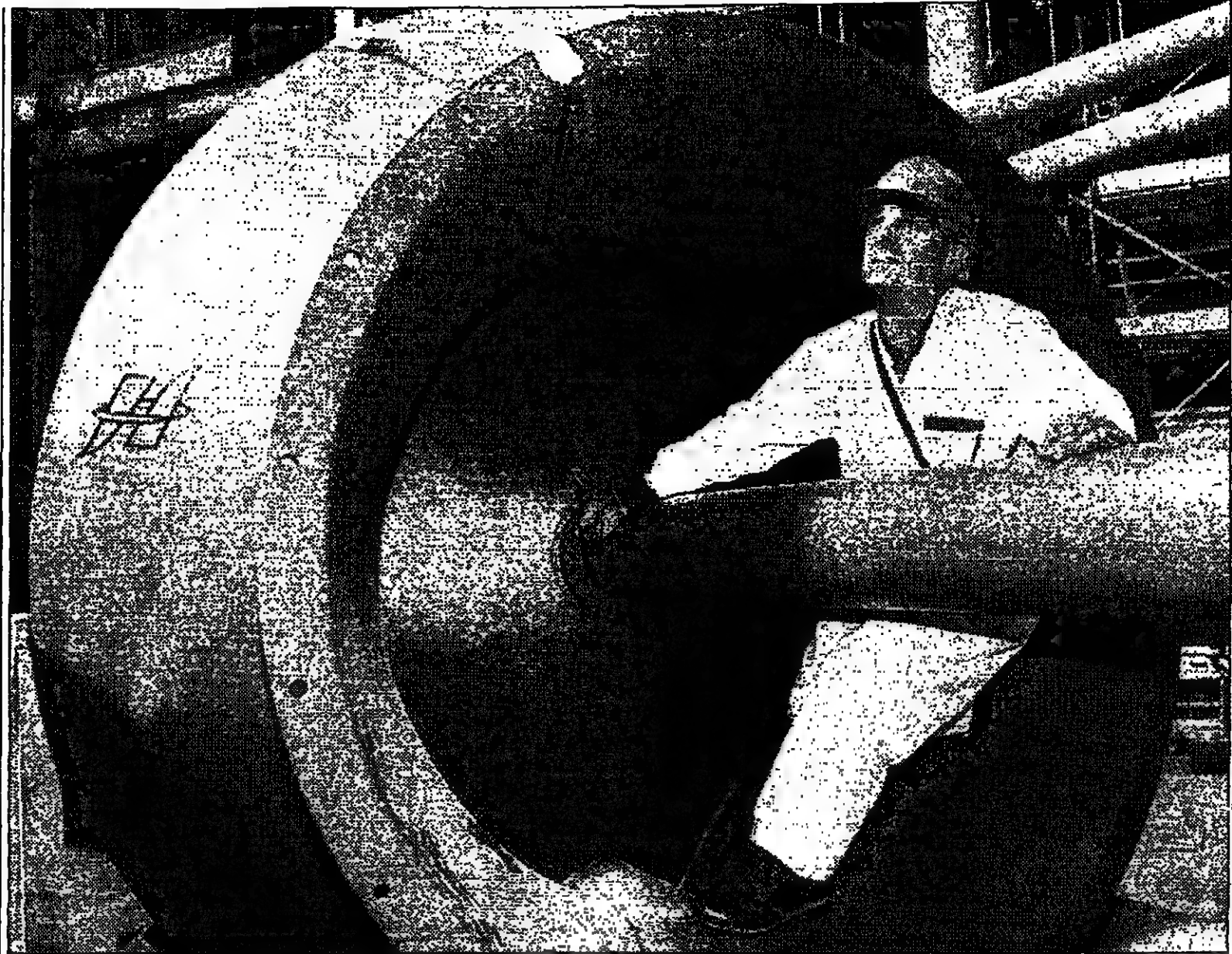
BAe's missile division employs some 2,800 people at three plants — Stevenage, Bristol and Lostock, while Matra's missile operations employ 2,200 at Vélizy, Soignies and Compiègne.

A Bae spokesman said that it was too early to speak about the implications for jobs within the combined business.

Lagardère in its ambitions towards Thomson. At this stage, its intervention is likely to be seen as boosting Lagardère's credibility as a bidder, as well as giving Bae access to information about Thomson. Industry watchers say it would be no surprise if GEC and Dasa were to be interested, and that their participation would also help Lagardère's case with the French government.

The ONIS said the core measure of producer price inflation, which excludes food, drink, tobacco and petroleum, fell to an annual rate of 2.8 per cent in April, against 3.4 per cent in March.

Retailers, however, had a better month, according to figures published today by the British Retail Consortium. The survey showed high street sales were worth 4.4 per cent more in April and March than they were during the same two months a year ago.



Generating jobs... Dennis Morrison of Mitsui Babcock supervises installation of a fan impeller as Scottish Power's £140 million project to extend the life of coal-fired power stations Longannet in Fife and Cockerzie, East Lothian, into the 21st century gets under way. PHOTOGRAPH DAVID HUTCHISON

City watchdog's eye still on WBL

Owen Bowcott

THE Securities and Futures Authority has summoned the chief executive of one of Britain's most lucrative commodity firms to a meeting with City regulators to ensure "compliance" with trading rules, it emerged yesterday.

In a letter to Winchester Brokerage Ltd (WBL), the SFA confirmed that it had decided not to initiate disciplinary action "on the basis of the facts now before it."

"However," the letter continued, "the SFA enforcement committee was concerned that there were issues raised by this case which might have implications for the future relationship between the SFA and WBL."

The senior executive officer from WBL "should meet with SFA officials in order to obtain reassurance that WBL is fully committed to compliance with SFA rules."

The exchange follows a long-running legal battle between the company and the SFA. Winchester has twice taken the regulators to court to demand they bring forward allegations or abandon in-

quiries. During the last year, in an unrelated move, both Charles Vincent, nicknamed Copperfingers, and the co-owner of Winchester, Ashley Levett, have left Britain to live in Monaco.

The SFA has been investigating multi-million pound mailings in the copper market involving the Chilean state producer Codelco, which lost \$200 million.

Two other London-based commodity firms, Sogemint and Metalgesellschaft, are being sued by the Chileans in connection with allegations that a Codelco employee was paid substantial bribes.

Welcoming yesterday's statement, Winchester said the SFA's letter proved there were "no plans to initiate disciplinary action against any of the companies within the Winchester Group."

Stephen Heath, the firm's managing director who has been asked to meet SFA officials, said yesterday: "The SFA inquiries have been a damaging distraction for the company. It is extremely good news that after a lengthy and comprehensive look at our business, the SFA have found that we have complied with all their rules."

Factory gate prices held down

Sarah Ryle

MANUFACTURERS have been forced to slash prices in order to sell goods as weak demand at home and abroad has prevented them from passing on higher production costs to customers, official figures showed yesterday.

Despite facing higher-than-expected input costs due to relatively strong oil prices, manufacturers held down factory gate prices according to a survey published by the Office for National Statistics.

As a result, the factory sector, which is now officially in recession, saw the annual

rate of overall price growth fall last month to its lowest level since December 1984.

The ONIS said the core measure of producer price inflation, which excludes food, drink, tobacco and petroleum, fell to an annual rate of 2.8 per cent in April, against 3.4 per cent in March.

Retailers, however, had a better month, according to figures published today by the British Retail Consortium. The survey showed high street sales were worth 4.4 per cent more in April and March than they were during the same two months a year ago.

The BRC said this was further evidence of strengthen-

ing consumer spending. Set against the producer price data, the survey also highlighted the two-tier nature of the economic recovery.

Andrew Sentance, chief economic adviser to the BRC, said manufacturers of consumer goods were already feeling the benefit of an upturn in consumer spending.

The ONIS survey, however, showed manufacturers had to drum up trade by holding prices down, even though input prices rose by 0.8 per cent in April against March to an annual rate of 3 per cent.

Producers' inability to pass on higher costs in current conditions could spell more

job losses in the sector, some City analysts suggested.

Others said that the latest figures could be unlikely to change Chancellor Kenneth Clarke's mind about interest rate levels. The Governor of the Bank of England, Eddie George, said last night in Basle, Switzerland, that "inflationary pressures are very subdued".

CIBC economist David Coleman said this suggested there would be no surprises in the Bank's quarterly inflation report, published today. This is likely to confirm the Bank's view that the Government is on course to meet its inflation target of 2.5 per cent or less.

Call to scrap productivity rises

Sarah Ryle

HIGHLY-PAID workers would have to rein in wage demands as part of a national strategy to cut unemployment without sending inflation soaring, according to the Employment Policy Institute, an independent economic think-tank.

The EPI also calls for a

break in the link between pay increases and higher productivity at individual firms in favour of rises linked to a national average.

And it is calling for the introduction of a minimum wage if Labour wins the next election.

But whatever the political complexion of the next government, the EPI report's authors believe an economic policy council, which would monitor pay deals and send disputes to arbitration, should be set up.

The EPI report warns that, although the current gradual fall in unemployment has had no adverse effect on wage inflation, Britain has underly-

ing structural employment problems, such as youth joblessness, which could spell danger in the future.

The report, Full Employment Without Inflation: A Policy for Pay, calls for a long-term strategy before "crisis management" becomes necessary.

Coordinating wage increases would mean moving away from a strict relationship between productivity gains and wage rises, according to one of the authors, John Greive Smith.

He says: "This means that professions which are investment-intensive have bigger rises than the public services,

for example. Pay increases should not be in line with an individual firm's productivity."

Instead, they should reflect the national average increase in productivity, and should maintain a balance between different employers.

The balance, the authors say, is threatened by "exceptional" pay increases, such as the 15 per cent rise Members of Parliament are set to pass for themselves.

They are calling on Labour to introduce a national minimum wage in one go, rather than gradually feeding it in, in order to have the least possible impact on other wage settlements.

Stet signals to C&W in code

John Glover in Milan

STET, Italy's national telecoms group, is hinting that it has a line open to Cable & Wireless, in the wake of the breakdown of C&W's merger talks with BT.

A Stet spokesman acknowledged that exploratory talks in the past between the two companies stalled during the BT merger discussions, "but the logic of the situation has not changed".

The logic is that both companies have been fruitless suitors in the merger mania gripping the telecoms industry. Stet has been negotiating a strategic partnership deal with the computer maker IBM for two years, but this has still not been signed.

At the weekend Stet managing director Ernesto Pascale said he thought an international agreement would be signed before the company was privatised later this year. Romano Prodi, who led the centre-left Olive Tree coal-

ition to victory at the recent general elections, has made the privatisation of Stet a priority.

The Italian press reported over the weekend that Mr Prodi was in favour of a link-up between Stet and C&W, plus C&W's allies, Germany's Vsb and Bouygues of France. This, it was reported, would involve some exchange of equity.

C&W said it did not comment on rumour and speculation.

"My information is that there will be a Stet-C&W announcement sometime in the next two-to-three weeks," said a senior executive at a rival telecoms company in Italy.

Stet and C&W are complementary in geographical terms. Stet, which dominates its home market, has extensive interests in Latin America, central and eastern Europe.

C&W strongholds are the Far East and UK, the latter a market Stet has eyed in the past.

News in brief

600 to be laid off at Clydeside yard

NEARLY 600 shipbuilders are to be laid off by Yarrow because the Clydeside subsidiary of GEC has a gap in its order book. A total of 570 jobs is going, even though the yard won a £400 million order in February from the Ministry of Defence to build three Type 23 frigates.

Some 430 people have already been made redundant since February. The latest job losses will affect 490 manual workers and 80 staff and managerial employees, predominantly from production. Workers will leave within the next 90 days. The workforce at the Glasgow yard now totals 1,900. — Tony May

PowerStore shuts shops

THE administrators of PowerStore (Trading) and Homepower Stores said that 31 stores were being closed from the end of next week with the loss of more than 280 jobs.

David Duggins, of administrator Arthur Andersen, said since being appointed on April 29 his firm had striven to preserve jobs but now had no alternative but to reduce the size of the business. He said there were a number of cases where a retail outlet in the high street had not been viable in the face of out-of-town stores. The companies will continue to trade from 84 stores and expressions of interest have been received from potential buyers. — Tony May

Beazer's luxury extension

BEAZER Homes, the UK's third-biggest housebuilder, has expanded into the luxury end of the market by acquiring the Charles Church group for £37.5 million from the Royal Bank of Scotland. Dennis Webb, Beazer's chief executive said he expected Charles, whose average selling price last year was £180,000, "to have a positive effect" on earnings in its first full year within the group made a profit before interest of £4.1 million on sales of £34.7 million. In the year to August 31, Charles Church sold 193 homes and £8.7 billion, 8 per cent lower than originally estimated.

The KWELM companies were members of the London United Investments group, many of whose customers were US medical and legal firms. — Pauline Springett

KWELM creditors get paid

Creditors of the five insolvent KWELM insurance companies are to receive a third payment of \$220 million (£146 million) this summer, bringing their total payout so far to over \$220 million. Chris Hughes, a partner at Coopers & Lybrand, one of the KWELM administrators, said the ultimate liabilities for the companies, which collapsed in the early 1990s, were around \$8.7 billion, 8 per cent lower than originally estimated.

The KWELM companies were members of the London United Investments group, many of whose customers were US medical and legal firms. — Pauline Springett

Conran takes Manhattan

STYLE entrepreneur Sir Terence Conran is exploring plans to open a large shop and restaurant complex at a site underneath the 59th Bridge on the upper east side of Manhattan. The site has been in development for two decades. The only signed tenant so far at the 100,000sq ft site is Bread & Circus, a Texas-based supermarket chain. — Mark Tran in New York

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John 10/15/96

Poker World Championship

Kira Jolliffe reports from Las Vegas where the sharpest card players in creation are pursuing wealth and a world title this week

Forget the lottery, this is \$1m stud

AS VEGAS usually makes it on to the sports pages as a big-time boxing venue, but its place in what might broadly be called the sporting life is secured this week by the world championship of poker...



Folding money... Las Vegas casino owner and host Jack Binion presents last year's winner Dan Harrington with a gold bracelet and a green million

The final \$10,000 round is the climax of a month-long World Series of Poker which Binion's has conducted in one form or another since 1970. This year it involved 25 lower-stakes rounds...

Each year so many of the same people reach the world championship final table, and the big money, that skill simply must count for more than luck in this game. For a subtle proof of this, one need look no further than the man whose epic playing inspired the tournament...

When Binion recreated that battle in 1970 with his annual world championship, Moss dominated by winning three times. He stayed on and played in Las Vegas (the city he called "Lost Wages") until his death this year in his eighties.

Preston, Tom McEvoy, Stu "The Kid" Ungar, Johnny Chan, Mansour Matloubi - Britain's 1990 world champion - and the title-holder Dan Harrington, a retired lawyer.

Texas Hold'em being what it is, two private "hole" cards and five communal cards in the centre, you can work out only from other players' betting patterns what cards they might be holding.

As to the money, the truth is that anyone good enough to win has to be so steeped in the poker philosophy that a million dollars cannot represent quite the same to him or her as it does to ordinary people.

Our British hope will be Mike "The Clock" Cook, who finished 11th last year and earned \$27,680. The authoritarians who have popularised the game in Britain - Anthony Holden with Big Deal, Al Alvarez with The Biggest Game in Town, and David Spiller with Total Poker - will variously be taking part, kibitzing (advising or second-guessing from the sidelines), and languishing in self-pity at home.

Alvarez is miffed at missing it for the first time in years. "I'm pretty good but Dan Harrington is very classy," he said. "They're all classy. Me playing with them is like a good club tennis player entering Wimbledon."

A flush licks a pair but nothing beats Texas Hold'em

POKER comes in many forms, usually involving five or seven cards, some of all of which are known only to the individual player, but the basic pecking order among hands is generally the same, writes Chris Curtain.

Thus, one pair is beaten by two pairs, which is beaten by three of a kind; then comes the straight (all cards in an unbroken running sequence, the higher the top card the better), flush (all same suit), full house (three of a kind plus a pair),

four of a kind and then the running flush (a straight, all in one suit). The basic game most people would recognise is known as five-card draw poker: each player is dealt five cards face down (which nobody else sees), there is a round of betting on the strength of those initial hands and then unwanted cards are "discarded" for replacements dealt fresh from the deck; and then betting recommences.

It goes without saying that betting and bluffing - sending signals which may or may not be correct via the pattern of your bets or the number of your discards - is the soul of poker.

Each player, two face down and one face up. They bet. A communal card is dealt face up and they bet again. Then another (more betting), and another (more betting) before a seventh and final card is dealt face down to each player. Who can make the best five-card hand out of that lot? They bet again.

The version of seven-card stud played in most casinos nowadays is known as Texas Hold'em. It goes like this: two hole cards; betting; three communal cards

turned over (the "flop" cards); betting; then comes a fourth communal card (the "river" card, since you ask); more betting; then the fifth and final communal card, and, yes, yet more betting.

York runners and riders with form

Table listing York race results for 2.00, 2.35, and 2.50, including horse names, jockeys, and trainers.

Table listing York race results for 3.40, 4.10, and 4.40, including horse names, jockeys, and trainers.

Table listing York race results for 4.55, 5.25, and 5.55, including horse names, jockeys, and trainers.

Table listing York race results for 6.00, 6.30, and 7.00, including horse names, jockeys, and trainers.

Chepstow National Hunt card

Table listing Chepstow National Hunt race results for 1.45, 2.15, 2.50, 3.20, 3.55, 4.25, 4.55, 5.25, 5.55, 6.00, 6.30, 7.00, 7.30, 8.00, 8.30, 9.00, 9.30, 10.00, 10.30, 11.00, 11.30, 12.00, 12.30, 13.00, 13.30, 14.00, 14.30, 15.00, 15.30, 16.00, 16.30, 17.00, 17.30, 18.00, 18.30, 19.00, 19.30, 20.00, 20.30, 21.00, 21.30, 22.00, 22.30, 23.00, 23.30, 24.00, 24.30, 25.00, 25.30, 26.00, 26.30, 27.00, 27.30, 28.00, 28.30, 29.00, 29.30, 30.00, 30.30, 31.00, 31.30, 32.00, 32.30, 33.00, 33.30, 34.00, 34.30, 35.00, 35.30, 36.00, 36.30, 37.00, 37.30, 38.00, 38.30, 39.00, 39.30, 40.00, 40.30, 41.00, 41.30, 42.00, 42.30, 43.00, 43.30, 44.00, 44.30, 45.00, 45.30, 46.00, 46.30, 47.00, 47.30, 48.00, 48.30, 49.00, 49.30, 50.00, 50.30, 51.00, 51.30, 52.00, 52.30, 53.00, 53.30, 54.00, 54.30, 55.00, 55.30, 56.00, 56.30, 57.00, 57.30, 58.00, 58.30, 59.00, 59.30, 60.00, 60.30, 61.00, 61.30, 62.00, 62.30, 63.00, 63.30, 64.00, 64.30, 65.00, 65.30, 66.00, 66.30, 67.00, 67.30, 68.00, 68.30, 69.00, 69.30, 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Soccer

Stubbs deal under threat from Fifa

Ian Ross
FIFA yesterday insisted that it had the power to scupper the £3.5 million transfer of Alan Stubbs from Bolton Wanderers to Celtic.

This is an important matter... The question of precisely who arranged and negotiated Stubbs's move was raised late last week by an unnamed football agent who, it is believed, formally protested to the Scottish FA.

Wolves' attempt to reach the Premiership is costing £6 million a year. The Molineux club showed a £6.1 million deficit over the 1994-95 season and a similar loss is expected for the campaign just ended.

Charlton slams Hoddle purdah

David Lacey hears a rising chorus of dissent and disbelief

DEPRY VENABLES starts his countdown to the European Championship today when the England squad train at Bisham Abbey in preparation for Saturday's friendly against Hungary at Wembley.

turn up at Bisham this morning the media scrum would be even more hectic than usual.

However, England's needs for the next World Cup should surely override these considerations. Hoddle has an awkward qualifier in Moldova on September 1 with little time to prepare for it.

Surgery rules out Stan

Stan Collymore's slender hope of making England's squad for the European Championship finals disappeared yesterday.

Collymore's injury problem will enter hospital for a hernia operation this week, putting him out of action for at least eight weeks, writes Ian Ross.



Leading player... Rick Parry outside the Lancaster Gate headquarters of the Premier League

More Parry than thrust

Martin Thorpe ends the season with the Premier League's gentry-does-it chief

LIKE everything in life, criticisms can be made of the Premier League. High ticket prices, the steady drift from working-class to middle-class crowds, the loss of the electric atmosphere of the standing generation, players' spiralling wages.

don't think there is a danger at the moment. But we could get it wrong in future if we don't run things sensibly.

It means top players are not going to come here... Parry says it is "blindingly obvious" that the supply of, and demand for, top players can be redressed by financing more youth development.

and highlights works, and it is likely this will be the same next time... Firm details are equally forthcoming from Parry about the ongoing "bung" inquiry, now more than two years old.

Gullit can still buy big

Martin Thorpe

RUUD GULLIT arrived back in London yesterday to take up his post as Chelsea's player-manager.

Chelsea striker Gianluca Vialli, and Chelsea have also had contact with Bayern Munich's former forward, striker Jürgen Klinsmann.

Bates said of his decision to tear up the partnership plan: "The negotiations have reached a stalemate where the requirements of neither side could be satisfied.

Rugby Union

Junior clubs and counties force Twickenham's hand

GRASSROOTS pressure may force the Rugby Football Union to hold a third special general meeting within six months to determine the future structure of the game.

Cricket

Wales recall striking pair

BOBBY GOULD has recalled several of Wales's senior players, among them the strikers Mark Hughes and Dean Saunders.

Baseball

National League Florida 7, Colorado 5

MONTELEONE (US) (11) Chicago Cubs 214 (N) 7-4-0; Pittsburgh Pirates 154 (Green 5-8); Los Angeles Dodgers 170 (2-0) 6-2-0.

Table Tennis

Carl Preen, who declined to play for England all last season, will compete in next month's Brazil Open in Rio de Janeiro, writes Richard Jago.

Carl Preen, who declined to play for England all last season, will compete in next month's Brazil Open in Rio de Janeiro, writes Richard Jago.

Table with 4 columns: Team, Goals, Points, etc. Includes Arsenal, Aston Villa, Birmingham City, Blackburn, Bolton, Brentford, Burnley, Chelsea, Coventry City, Derby County, Everton, Huddersfield.

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Table with 4 columns: Team, Goals, Points, etc. Includes Manchester City, Middlesbrough, Norwich City, Southampton, Stoke City, Sunderland, Tottenham Hotspur, West Ham, West London, Wolves, Rangers.

Rugby League

Oz off route for GB tour

GREAT BRITAIN will play five Tests when they tour at the end of the current Super League season, but it is not yet certain if they will visit Australia.

That could depend on the outcome of the court case on Thursday week when Rupert Murdoch's News Corporation appears against the decision to outlaw the Australian Super League until the year 2000.

Connelly and Robinson have agreed to play under the ARL banner in the future and have received sizeable "loyalty" bonuses from the Australian body.

Wigan have joined Bradford Bulls in the case to sign Stuart Spruce, the Wales full-back, but both clubs' offers of around £100,000 have been rejected by Doug Loughton, Widnes's coach.

Great Britain, who will depart on September 21, will play Tests against Papua New Guinea and Fiji and three against New Zealand. The tour is to end with the third Test in Christchurch on October 25.

Great Britain officials, back from the Asian Shah tournament in Malaysia, will not announce their squad for the Olympics this week as planned because of their injury list, which includes Paul Rowley, which leaves only Simon Hazlett, writes Pat Rowley.

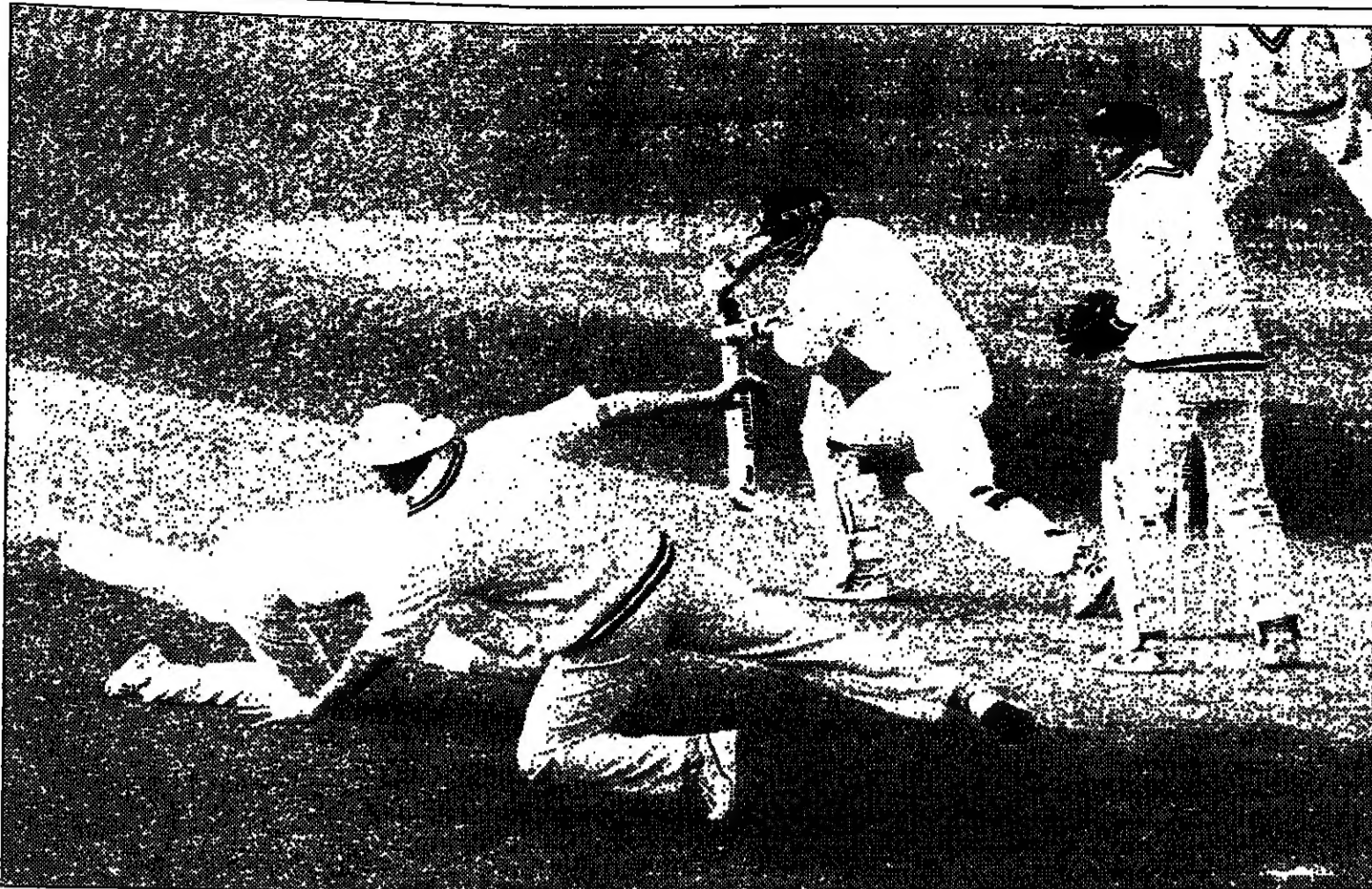
Cricket Benson & Hedges Cup News and Scores 0891 22 88+ Derbyshire 31 Middlesex 40 Durham 32 Northants 41 Essex 33 Nottingham 42 Gloucestershire 34 Somerset 43 Glamorgan 35 Surrey 44 Hampshire 36 Sussex 45 Kent 37 Warwickshire 46 Lancashire 38 Worcestershire 47 Leicestershire 39 Yorkshire 48

Teamtalk The Independent News and Reports Service Call 0891 33 77+

Wales recall striking pair Bobby Gould has recalled several of Wales's senior players, among them the strikers Mark Hughes and Dean Saunders.

Cricket Benson & Hedges Cup News and Scores 0891 22 88+ Derbyshire 31 Middlesex 40 Durham 32 Northants 41 Essex 33 Nottingham 42 Gloucestershire 34 Somerset 43 Glamorgan 35 Surrey 44 Hampshire 36 Sussex 45 Kent 37 Warwickshire 46 Lancashire 38 Worcestershire 47 Leicestershire 39 Yorkshire 48

Cricket Benson & Hedges Cup News and Scores 0891 22 88+ Derbyshire 31 Middlesex 40 Durham 32 Northants 41 Essex 33 Nottingham 42 Gloucestershire 34 Somerset 43 Glamorgan 35 Surrey 44 Hampshire 36 Sussex 45 Kent 37 Warwickshire 46 Lancashire 38 Worcestershire 47 Leicestershire 39 Yorkshire 48



Out of reach... Surrey's Mark Butcher fights a rearguard action at The Oval yesterday. Kent had reached 361, leaving the home team to score 227 for victory. Surrey finished on 160 for six, Martin McCague's spell of three wickets from 11 balls having put them on the back foot. PHOTOGRAPH: FRANK BARON

Tennis

Beaten Rusedski turns to Teacher

Stephen Marley in Rome

REG RUSEDSKI, ousted out of the first round of the Italian Open yesterday by the No. 2 seed Goran Ivanisevic, will team up with a new coach, Brian Teacher, this week in an attempt to lift himself up the world rankings and regain his place as Britain's No. 1, recently taken by Tim Henman.

ing well since reaching the final of the Key Biscayne tournament against Agassi in March, where he withdrew after three sets with a neck problem. His frustration erupted here in the first game of the second set when he twice hurled his racket to the ground, then propelled it into the cooler box by the umpire's chair. An official warning followed.

ash; here on clay, rallies went into double figures. Rusedski, frequently employing a deeply sliced backhand, certainly forced the Croatian's hand. "It was tough to pass him," Ivanisevic admitted. "It is difficult to play guys like this when there is no real rhythm to a match."

County Championship: Yorkshire v Derbyshire

White finds his old fire

David Hopps at Sheffield

GRAIG WHITE has withstood more jibes than most for England's recent inadequacies but those who dismiss him as a figment of Raymond Illingworth's imagination might have had cause for a hasty reassessment had they witnessed him almost bowl Yorkshire to an unlikely victory.

encouraging pace and bounce White took four for three in 11 balls to leave Derbyshire's ninth-wicket pair, Aldred and Vandrau, blocking the last seven overs for a draw.

Derbyshire, driven by Adams's belligerent 66 from 36 balls, had developed the impetus which suggested another 87 from the last 12 overs was a distinct possibility. But Adams fell to a brilliant low catch by Silverwood, and Krikken ran himself out next ball, risking a single to backward point, where Bevan pounced, to hit a single stump at speed.

Tour match: Gloucestershire v Indians

Dinkum Symonds says a little at last

David Foot at Bristol

THERE was an unusual, virtually spontaneous ceremonial within the press box during mid-afternoon and it is worth recording. We lined up to applaud a young Indian journalist on his return.

155 behind on first innings and then the Indians in turn declared at lunch on 144 for six. Sourav Ganguly was 64 not out, with 11 fours and a six to his credit. The depleted county attack had looked a modest one.

Durham hit new low as Follett takes eight wickets

DAVID FOLLETT, the Middlesex pace bowler, yesterday demolished Durham for 67, their lowest championship total, to clinch a 306-run victory at Lord's, writes Don Best.

their only double-figure score. Ronnie Irani struck a match-winning 81 not out as Essex beat Hampshire by four wickets at Southampton, Essex, needing 329 from 69 overs to win, had stumbled to 168 for four before he joined Paul Frithard (69) in putting on 112.

the day 242 ahead on 135 for seven, lost their last three wickets to Paul Grayson, whose four for 82 was his best first-class performance.

Professional respect, even envy, showed in the eyes of the hacks, for Joseph Hoover had achieved what we had singularly failed to do: he had interviewed the rigidly uncommunicative Andrew Symonds. More than that, he had actually got him to say he wanted to play for England.

Lancashire v Leicestershire

Millns and Nixon stand firm

Andy Wilson at Old Trafford

IT TOOK Leicestershire exactly an hour to kill off the final day of this game by scoring the 38 runs required at the start to avoid the follow-on. That represented quite an achievement by their eighth-wicket pair of Paul Nixon and David Millns, who had come together on Saturday afternoon, needing 161 for safety.

only players to reach three figures in the match. No amount of contrivance could manufacture a result with less than five hours remaining on a blameless Old Trafford pitch, but Leicestershire's left-arm spinner Matthew Emburey emerged from the ensuing tedium with the notable scalps of Atherton, Gallian and Crawley, the latter two for half-centuries, all three clean bowled.

Northampton v Glamorgan

Dale's dozenth does it for Welsh

Mike Selvey at Northampton

WITH only two wins here in 30 years, Wantage Road had not been Glamorgan's happiest hunting ground. They made amends yesterday, however, a partnership of 117 in 22 overs before Adrian Dale and Tony Cottet setting up a five-wicket victory after the Welsh side had been set a generous target of 379.

and there was scant indication then that it would produce 1,200 runs and only 23 wickets. Yesterday the surface retained its initial bounce and there was also a hint of turn for Emburey, so Northants ought to have done better. Glamorgan can perhaps thank above all the knee injury that kept Curtly Ambrose out; he would have been an awesome proposition on this track.

Golf

Harrington thanks Seve for pointing the long way home

David Davies

BY ONE of those quirks of fate, the British Airways flight 5041 from Madrid to Manchester yesterday chose to fly over Santander. For one of the passengers it was an almost unbelievable coincidence and as the aeroplane winged its way over the town's golf course, Royal Padrena, home to Severiano Ballesteros, Padraig Harrington said: "Perhaps it's because of him I won the Spanish Open."

last week's Spanish Open, to beat Ballesteros by 16 shots. But the Irishman was convinced of two things: that to play 36 holes on the last day of the rain-affected tournament was the right thing to do, and that it was because of the urging of Ballesteros that it was not a 54-hole tournament.

game. The more chances he got, he reasoned, the more he could take. "He has not always been so positive. "Between the ages of 17 and 19," he said, "I was in the top four of 24 tournaments and I only won two of them. I lost a lot and I threw away a few more."

starts racing and then so do I. Everything speeds up and I lose my rhythm. The aspect of his win that pleased him most was that "I never saw the winning post until the last hole". He never allowed himself to think that if he maintains his position in the Order of Merit for a fortnight he will qualify to play in the US Open.

Boxing

Battle for Lewis fight

Don Best

DON KING's plans to stage a world heavyweight title fight between Mike Tyson and Britain's Lennox Lewis are threatened by competition from Seth Abraham, who heads the American cable network Home Box Office.

haired promoter and keep it in the family, as Lewis is contracted to HBO. The plan involves HBO, cable stations in Britain, delayed terrestrial TV coverage and a closed-circuit operation.

Much depends on an appeal in New Jersey Supreme Court in which Tyson is seeking to overturn a lower court judgment prohibiting him from defending against any contender other than Lewis and preventing him fighting for any other version of the title.

Sport and Television

BBC fights back with bumper package

Andrew Cuff Media Correspondent

PLEA by the BBC's head of sport for additional funds to compete with the BBC's Rupert Murdoch's cable-booker has been approved by the corporation's senior executives.

secure long-term contracts for the Olympic Games until 2008, the Commonwealth Games in 1998, the Open golf championship and world athletics championships until 2001, and soccer's 1998 World Cup and 2000 European championship, plus the rugby league Challenge Cup.

This summer the BBC will screen 300 hours of coverage from the Olympic Games in Atlanta and 50 hours of the Euro 96 championship.

Scoreboard

Table with 2 columns: Match, Score. Includes results for Lancashire v Leicestershire, Northampton v Glamorgan, and Surrey v Kent.

Surrey v Kent

Table with 2 columns: Player, Runs/Wickets. Includes names like M A Eatham, M V Fleming, M A Butler.

India

Table with 2 columns: Player, Runs/Wickets. Includes names like S Biju, D Devis, S Ganguly.

Starting today

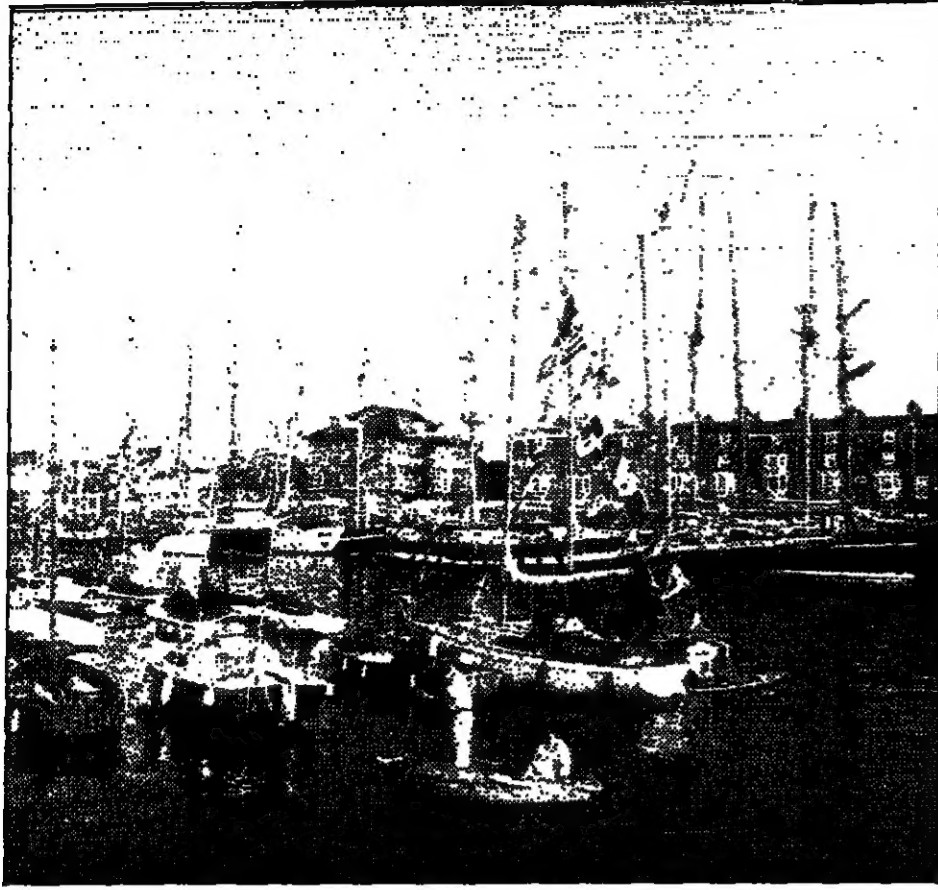
Table with 2 columns: Match, Venue. Includes matches like Essex v Hampshire, Lancashire v Leicestershire.

The biggest deal of them all, page 13
Fifa probes Stubbs transfer, page 14

Rusedski meets his early match, page 15
Giants battle over Lewis fight, page 15

SportsGuardian

CAN WEYMOUTH GATECRASH YACHTING'S MOST EXCLUSIVE PARTY?



San Diego... bulging with the action of last year's America's Cup

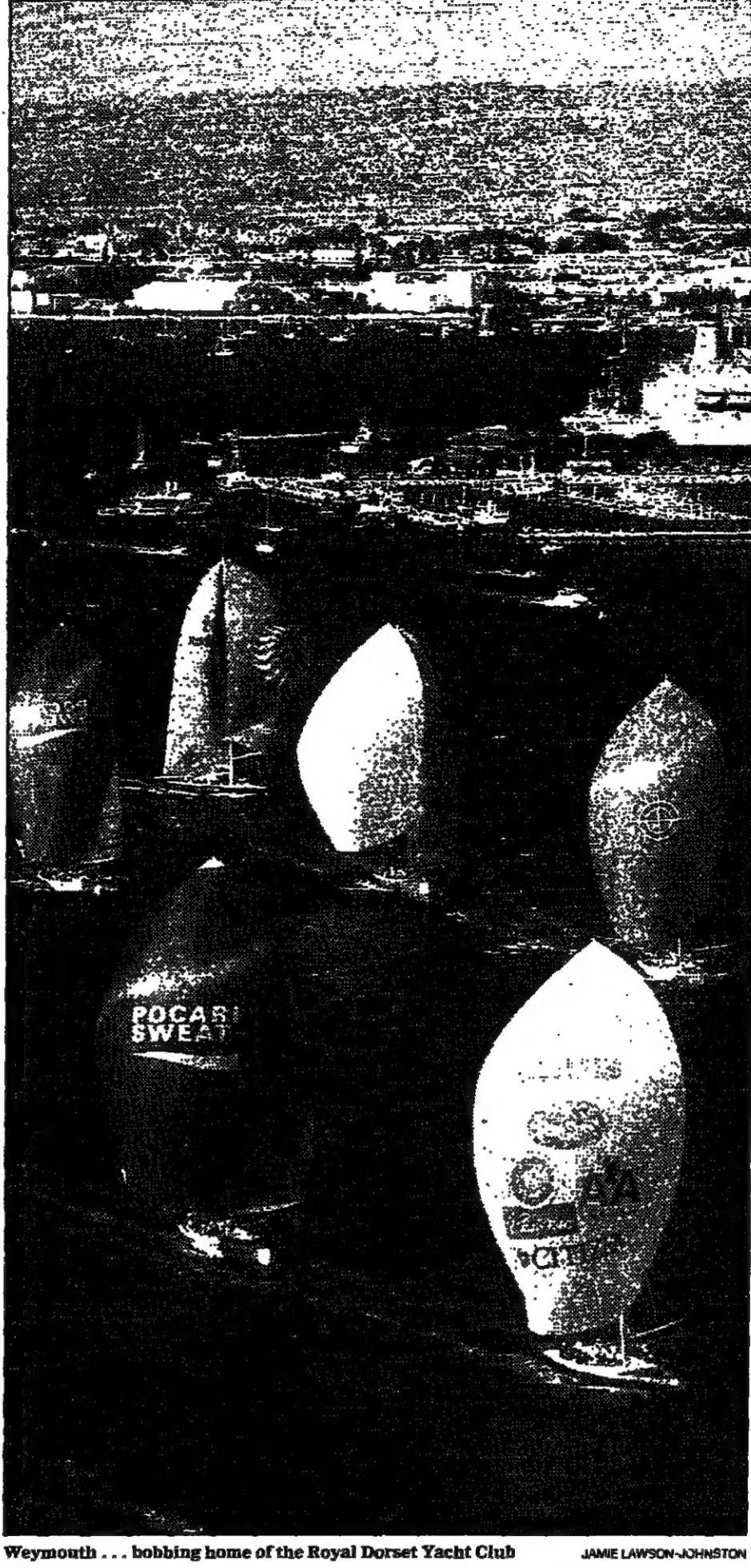
John Duncan and Bob Fisher report on an unlikely south coast challenge for the America's Cup and the mystery over its backers

Dorset gripped by cup fever

THE Royal Dorset Yacht Club has launched an audacious campaign to match the America's Cup from New Zealand and bring the most expensive prize in sport to the shelves of the former Spinaker Restaurant in Weymouth.

York Yacht Club, which held the cup for 132 years to 1983. Other challenges have come from Spain, Japan and France.

"Details of the consortium, the design group and sailing and support teams will not be released at this time," said Simmonds, a lifeboatman.



Weymouth... bobbing home of the Royal Dorset Yacht Club

Wigan shatter 100 years of attitude



Richard Williams

LESS than a week ago rugby people were nudging one another and saying what a hoot it would be if Wigan made a decent showing in the Middlesex Sevens.

One lesson the world has learnt in the last decade is that the established order can change just about overnight. One minute communism has been there for as long as anyone can remember; the next thing you know, they're trucking Lenin's statue to the tip on the outskirts of town.

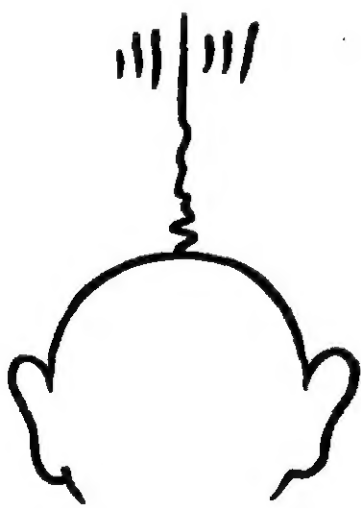
Indeed, the only way to stop Wigan at Twickenham would have been to get a late entry for seven men from another top league side.

earlier in the week. But on the way to claiming the title, Wigan dismissed Richmond, Harlequins, Leicester and Wasps, historically four of the English union's biggest clubs.

THE trouble with the 15-run code in the British Isles is that it is a great game generally played to a very poor standard.

But not in time for the return fixture a week on Saturday. In recent days those people who were initially predicting a 50-point victory for Bath under union rules have been revising their estimate down to a margin of 20 points or so.

MORSE



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Back ban angers Tigers

Robert Armstrong on the six-month suspension of Leicester's England flanker

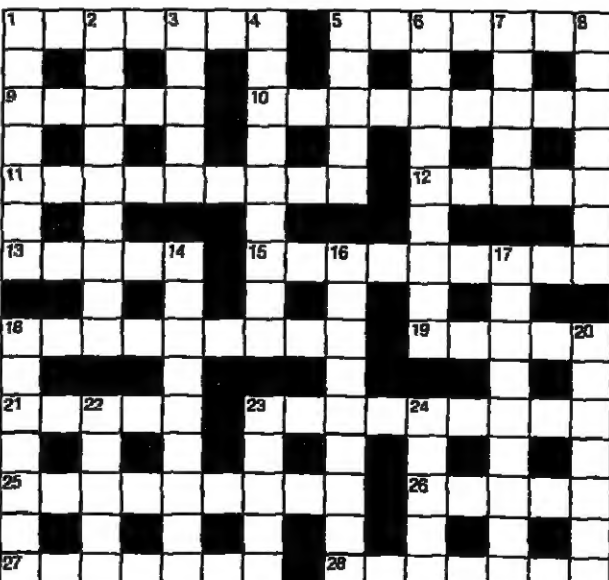
LEICESTER are poised to challenge the six-month suspension the Rugby Football Union has imposed on Neil Back for pushing the referee Steve Lander at the end of the Pilkington Cup final on May 4.

sex). Peter Trunkfield (Nottinghamshire) and Bob Taylor (National Clubs' Association), made up the disciplinary panel, which considered video analysis which showed that Back had pushed the referee.

The committee's assessment of the player's culpability can be gauged from the fact that Ireland's Peter Clohesy also received a six-month ban, in his case for kicking an opponent during a Five Nations match against France in February.

Guardian Crossword No 20,652

Set by Janus



- Across
1 Is in agreement at weddings (7)
5 He wrote to monarch about lip-service (7)
9 He entered the ring with some empty sonneting (5)
10 Able to play on one sort of old instrument? (9)
11 Whers in church to find lines by John (9)
12 Perfect fish to a beginner (5)
13 Chooses politician in jet-set (5)
15 Having striking effect on child in play perhaps (9)
18 The Gorman campanologist's arm (9)
19 Refused to leave work-material (5)
21 Fabric evoking some reaction in onlooker (5)
23 Getting rid of scrimmaging (9)
Down
25 Route used by baggage-carriers? (5,4)
26 Net used in river (5)
27 Forsakes barren tracts (7)
28 Wanders round and gets commissions (7)
Word
1 List of churchwomen liable to change (7)
2 List of questions for journal on trial (4,5)
3 Language rich in dialectical choice (5)
4 Not much fish of a measured size (9)
5 Money subscribed for young animal (5)
6 Nothing against royal persons going round country districts (9)
7 One wise man's appearance (5)

Learned feminist scholars have said that I must have a small penis, or that I must be impotent, that I must have trouble getting a woman or that I must hate women. Such are the refinements of argument in the gender debate.

Neil Lyndon

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